

THE
HISTORY
AND
ADVENTURES
OF
GIL BLAS
OF
SANTILLANE.
IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

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THE
HISTORY
AND
ADVENTURES
OF
GIL BLAS



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THE AUTHOR'S DECLARATION.

THERE being some persons who cannot read a book, without making vicious and ridiculous applications of the characters they find in it; I declare to those malicious readers, that they will be in the wrong, if they apply the portraits in this to particular persons. I make this public confession, that all I aimed at was to represent the life of man such as it is. God forbid I should have a design to mark out any person in particular. Let no reader therefore take that to himself which suits others as well as him: otherwise, as Phædrus says, he will make an unlucky discovery of his own character. *Stultè nudabit animi conscientiam.*

There are physicians in Castile, as well as in France, whose method is to bleed their patients too much. The same vices, the same originals are every where to be met with. I own I have not always exactly imitated the manners of the Spaniards. And those that know what disorderly lives the players at Madrid lead, may blame me for not painting them in more lively colours; but I thought it proper to soften some parts of them, that they might be more conformable to our way of living in France.

G I L B L A S

T O T H E

R E A D E R.

BEFORE thou enterest upon the story of my life, hearken, kind reader, to the tale I am about to tell thee.

Two scholars going together from Pennafiel to Salamanca, and finding themselves weary and faint, stopped by the side of a fountain which they came to in their way. As they were resting themselves there, they, by chance, spied a stone, with some words written upon it, almost effaced by time, and the feet of the flocks that came to drink at that spring: they washed the dirt off the stone; and when they could read the words distinctly, they found this inscription in the Castilian tongue: *Aquí está encerrada el alma del Licenciado Pedro Garcías*: “The soul of the Licentiate Pedro Garcías is here inclosed.” The youngest of the scholars, a brisk blunt boy, had no sooner read the inscription, but he laughed and cried, “The soul here inclosed:—“A soul inclosed; I would fain know the author of such a foolish epitaph.” So saying, he got up and went away; while his companion, who had more judgment, said to himself, “There must be some mystery in it: I will stay and see whether I can find it out.” Accordingly he let the other scholar

TO THE READER.

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scholar go before him ; and when he was gone, he pulled out his knife, and dug up the earth about the stone, which at last he removed, and found under it a leather purse, which he opened. There were a hundred ducats in it, with a card, wherein was written in Latin to this effect. “ Be thou my
“ heir, thou who hast wit enough to find out the
“ meaning of this inscription, and make a better
“ use of my money than I did.” The scholar was overjoyed at this discovery, covered the place with the stone again, and proceeded to Salamanca with the soul of the Licentiate in his pocket.

Whoever thou art, kind reader, that art going to resemble one or the other of those two scholars ; if thou readest my adventures without having regard to the moral instructions that are contained in them, this work will be of no use to thee ; but if thou readest them with attention, thou wilt meet with the **UTILE** and the **DULCE**, according to the rule of Horace.

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THE

THE
HISTORY
OF
GIL BLAS
DE SANTILLANE.

BOOK I.

CHAP. I.

Of Gil Blas's birth and education.

BLAS of Santillane, my father, having a long time borne arms for the service of the Spanish monarchy, retired at last to the town he was born in, where he married a woman that could by no means be said to be in the flower of her youth. At ten months end I came into the world; and they afterwards removed to Oviedo, where my mother served a gentleman in the quality of a chambermaid, and my father in that of groom. As they had nothing to live upon but their wages, I should have been in danger of a very indifferent education, if I had not had a canon for my uncle, imagine to yourself a little man of three foot and a half high, with a head sunk into his shoulders: such a one was this uncle of mine. He was a priest who minded nothing but good living, I mean good cheer; and his titnes, which were pretty considerable,

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able, furnished him with the means of doing it, according to his appetite.

He took me from a child, and had the care of breeding me up. My parts were so promising, that he resolved to cultivate them. He bought me a horn book, and undertook to teach me to read himself, which was no small improvement of his own reading also: for by teaching me my letters, he recovered the knowledge of them, which he had lost by long disuse; and thus in a little while he could run over his breviary very cleverly, which he could not do before. He would fain have taught me Latin too; it would have saved him some money in his pocket; but ah, poor Gil Perez! he knew not how many parts of speech there were. He was perhaps (for I would not be too positive in asserting it) the most ignorant canon of all the chapter, I have been told, that he got his benefice, not by his learning, but by the favour of some nuns, for whom he had proved a discreet and successful agent; and they had interest enough to get him admitted into orders, without passing through any examination. His ignorance obliged him to put me to school. Accordingly he sent me to Dr. Sodiner, who had the character of the most able pedant of Oviedo. I made so good use of his lessons, that in five or six years time I understood something of the Greek authors, and was tolerably well acquainted with the Latin. I applied myself also to logic, which helped me out at a pinch, when I was put to it for want of arguments, as it often happened to me, through an inordinate desire of disputation; which I was so fond of, that I frequently stopped people as they went along the streets, whether I knew them or not, to propose arguments to them. I sometimes met with some Irishmen, who loved disputing as well as myself, and we made rare work of it. Lord, what grimaces! what gestures! what contortions! fire sparkled in our eyes, and we
always

always foamed at the mouth: every one that saw us, ought to have taken us rather for madmen than philosophers.

By this means I acquired the reputation of a learned person, and my uncle was overjoyed to find me so forward, hoping it would ease him of any farther expence about me. So, Gil Blas, says he to me one day, thou art out of thy childhood, it is time for thee to provide for thyself, thou art eighteen, and a notable lad; I think to send thee to the university of Salamanca; thou canst not fail of getting some employment or other there. I will give thee my mule, which is worth ten or twelve pistoles, and put some ducats in thy pocket. Thou mayst sell the mule at Salamanca and live upon the money till thou canst get thee a place.

He could not have made me a more agreeable proposal; for I longed mightily to see the country; however I did not let him see it. I concealed my joy: and when we parted, I seemed to be so grieved at my leaving an uncle who had been so kind to me, that the good man was touched with it, and gave more money than I should have had of him, had he known the bottom of my soul. Before I departed, I took leave of my father and mother, who failed not to give me very good counsel: they admonished me to pray for my uncle, to avoid ill company, and above all things to beware of wronging any body, and taking what was not my own. After a long harangue of this kind, they made me a present of their blessing, the only gift I had of them: I mounted my mule, and quitted Oviedo.

CHAP. II.

How he was alarmed as he was going to Penafler ; what he did when he came thither, and with whom he supped.

BEING got out of town in the road to Penafler, master of my own actions, of a sorry mule, and forty good ducats, besides some reals which I had stole from my most honoured uncle ; the first thing I did was to give my mule her head, and to go at what pace she pleased : I threw the bridle on her neck, took the ducats out of my pocket, and told them over and over in my hat. I had never seen so much money in all my life, and I could not help telling it, and handling it. I suppose it might be about the twentieth time of telling, when my mule pricked up her ears, and stopped in the middle of the highway. I imagined she was frightened, and looking to see what was the occasion of it, I saw a hat on the ground, with a huge rosary upon it, and heard a lamentable voice pronouncing these words : Have pity, Signior, on a poor crippled soldier : for the Lord's sake throw some of those pieces into my hat : God will reward you for it " in the other world." Turning my head to the place from whence the voice came, I spied a kind of a soldier under a hedge ten yards off me, he held out a pole, which seemed to me to be as long as a pike, and rather intended for arms than for a support. At sight of this I fell into a panic, and did not know what to do. In the first place I took care of my ducats, put them into my pocket, and pulled out some reals. I then approached the hat, which was disposed to receive the charity of all frightened believers ; I threw them into it one after another, to let the soldier see how generous I was. He was satisfied with my noble way of proceeding, and gave me as many blessings as I gave strokes with

with my heel into my mule's sides, to get him from him as fast I could: but the cursed jade made not the greater speed for it: she had been so long used to go my uncle's slow pace, just one leg before the other, that she had forgot what a gallop was.

I did not at all like this omen: I thought to myself, I am not got to Salamanca yet, and something worse than this may befall me before I get thither: my uncle should not have let me go by myself; but doubtless he did it to save charges, and not considered the risk I run in travelling alone at my years. I therefore resolved as soon as I came to Penafier to sell my mule, and go by the carrier to Astorga, and so to Salamanca after the same manner. Though I had never been out of Oviedo, I knew the names of the towns I was to pass through, having informed myself of them before my departure.

Being arrived at Penafier, I stopped at the gate of an inn, which made a pretty good appearance. I no sooner alighted than the man of the house came and received me very civilly. He untied my portmanteau, put it upon his shoulders, and conducted me to my chamber: the hostler took my mule, and led it into the stable. My landlord was the most talkative person of all his fraternity, and whether there was occasion for it or no, was very free to tell one all his private affairs. He was no less inquisitive about those that did not concern him. He told me his name was Andrea Corcuelo, that he had served in the army many years as a serjeant, and had quitted the service fifteen months before, to marry a young woman of Castropol, who, though she was no beauty, did the business of the house well enough. He told me abundance of other things, which I was not very fond of hearing; and in return for so great confidence, he thought I could do no less than satisfy his demands who I was, and whence I came. He would needs

have me answer him article by article, accompanying every question with a pause and a low bow, praying me to excuse his curiosity, and that with so much respect, that I could not help satisfying it. This necessarily drew me into a long conference with him, and gave me an opportunity to talk of my design to dispose of my mule, and go the rest of my journey by the carrier. He highly approved of my reasons, and represented to me the many sad accidents I might be exposed to on the road, telling me several dismal stories of travellers, which he exaggerated and enlarged on so much, that I thought he would never have done. At last he came to the case, and said, if I would sell my mule, he knew an honest jobber who would buy it of me. I let him know I should think myself mightily obliged for that piece of service; and he went immediately to fetch my chapman.

He soon returned, and brought his man with him, whom he recommended for his honesty: the mule was led out into the yard, and we three went to view it. My chapman examined it from head to foot, and made the hostler ride him up and down the yard, which did not at all add to the credit of the beast. The jobber found a hundred faults with it, and truly there was not much good to be said of it; but if it had been the Pope's mule, the fellow would have had something to say against it. He swore mine was good for nothing; and to convince me of the truth of what he said, he obliged my landlord to vouch for it, who doubtless had his reasons to say what the jobber would have him. The latter turning to me, said gruffly, You would not impose such a beast upon me for a good one, I hope; he is not worth driving home. After he and my host had passed judgment upon my mule, I took it for granted that he was as bad as they made him to be. I therefore threw myself upon the honesty of the jobber, and bid him give me for it
what

what he thought in his conscience it was worth. My man, pretending to be a person of strict honour, replied, that by referring it to his conscience I had taken him by the weak side; and indeed I found it was not his strongest: for instead of coming up to the value my uncle set upon it of ten or twelve pistoles, he had the impudence to rate it at three ducats; which I took with as much joy as if I had gained by the bargain.

Having disposed of my mule so advantageously, my host carried me to a carrier, who was to set out next day to Astorga; the carrier said he should be going before day light, and that he would come and call me. We agreed for the price, as well for the mule he was to provide me, as for my maintenance on the road; and when that was done I returned with Corcueto to my inn. My landlord told me the history of the carrier by the way, and what the people said of him there. He deafened me with his babbling, and I believe would have murdered me with it if by good luck, a man who looked like a gentleman had not come and interrupted him. I left them together, and went towards my room, not dreaming that I was at all concerned in their conversation.

I called for supper, and it being a fast-day, they accommodated me with some eggs: while they were getting them, I entered into discourse with my landlady, whom I had not seen before. She was not over-handsome, but had such a way with her, that if her husband had not told me, I should have guessed that she knew how to do the business of his house. When my eggs were ready, I sat down at table by myself; before I could put a bit into my mouth, in comes my host, and brings in with him the man I spoke of, who took him off from his long tale to me about the muleteer. The gentleman had a sword by his side, and was thirty years of

age: he came up to me with a very solemn look, and accosted me thus: Mr. Scholar, I am informed you are Signior Gil Blas of Santillane, the ornament of Oviedo, and the flambeau of philosophy. Is it possible that your scholarship should be so deep, and that you are the person whose wit is so much talked of in this country? You do not know, continues he, addressing himself to my landlord and landlady, what a man you have in your house: he is a treasure, and the eighth wonder of the world. He then turned to me, and taking me about the neck, Pardon, says he, young gentleman, pardon my transports, the sight of you gives me so much joy, that I am not my own master.

I did not know what to say to him, in return for his extraordinary compliment; and besides he held me so fast, that I could hardly fetch breath. With much ado I got loose of him, and replied, Signior, I did not think that any knew my name at Penafier. How, says he, not know your name? we keep a register of all illustrious persons within twenty leagues round us: you pass for a prodigy, and I doubt not but one time or other Spain will be as proud of having produced you, as Greece was of having given birth to the seven wise men. These words were accompanied with fresh embraces, which I was forced to undergo, though with the peril of being served as Anteus was. Had I had ever so little experience, it would have been impossible for me to be bubbled by his hyperboles; I should have smelt his extravagant flattery, and have found out he was one of those parasites that are to be met with in all cities, ready to break in upon any stranger, and cram himself at his expence: but my youth and my vanity made me judge of him otherwise. I took him for a man of great honour and judgment, and invited him to sup with me. With all my heart, cries he, I rejoice too much in my good fortune, in having met with the renowned
Gil

Gil Blas of Santillane, not to take hold of so glorious an opportunity of enjoying his company, and having as much of it as I can. I have no great stomach, continued he, I will however eat a bit or two out of complaisance. He then set himself down over-against me: a napkin was brought him, and a fresh supply of eggs, which he swallowed as fast as if he had not ate in three days. That parcel was soon dispatched, and then another and another; he all the while finding leisure to overwhelm me with his eulogies, not omitting my person, which I took very kindly of him, tho' it was not of a size to be the subject of panegyric. He drank often; sometimes it was my health, sometimes my father's and mother's, whose happiness in having such a son he could never enough admire. Every now and then he would fill up my glass, and urge me to pledge him in a bumper to such agreeable toasts. I was not backward in obliging him; and the wine and his flattery put me into so good a humour, that I was not satisfied with a supper of eggs. I must have some fish also for him. Signior Coreuelo, who no question had an understanding with the parasite, said, he had an excellent trout in the house, but it would come dear, and was too nice a dish for me. Too nice? said my flatterer, raising his voice; you forget yourself, friend, can any thing be too nice for Signior Gil Blas de Santillane? he deserves to be treated like a prince.

I was very glad that he took up my landlord so: I was going to do it myself; and when he had done, cried, "Bring your trout, Sir, and don't you trouble yourself about the niceness of it." That was what the host wanted. The trout was presently got ready, and served up to table. At the sight of this new dish I perceived the parasite's eyes sparkle with joy; and he ate of that with the same complacency that he dispatched the eggs. At last he was forced to give over, for fear of an ill acci-

dent, having crammed himself up to the throat; and to finish the farce, he rose from the table, saying, Signior Gil Blas, I am too well pleased with your entertainment, to leave you without giving you some important advice, which you seem to stand in need of. Beware hereafter of flattery; be upon your guard against men whom you have no knowledge of: you may find others will, like me, impose upon your credulity, and perhaps carry the matter farther. Be not their cully, and do not take their word if they tell you, you are the eighth wonder of the world. Saying this, he laughed in my face, and retired. I was as much out of countenance at having this trick put upon me as ever I was at the greatest disgraces that happened to me in the course of my life. I could not bear being so grossly bubbled, or rather to have my pride so mortified. How, said I to myself, has the traitor made a jest of me? he was so close with my landlord, to carry on his plot against me: it was a contrivance between them. Ah poor Gil Blas, go hang thyself for shame of being made sport of by such rascals. They will make a fine story of it, which will soon get to Oviedo, and be a mighty honour to thee. Thy parents will doubtless repent that they took so much pains in instructing a dunce not to cheat any body. They should surely have exhorted me not to be cheated myself. Thus, full of spite and shame, I locked myself up in my chamber, and went to bed; but I could not sleep a wink; the muleteer came at break of day to tell me he staid for me. I got up, and while I was dressing me, Corcuelo brought in his bill, where the trout was not forgotten. He not only charged every thing at his own prices, but I observed, when I paid him, the rogue grinned at the thought of my adventure. My reckoning being discharged, I went with my portmanteau to the carrier, giving a hearty curse to the parasite, my host, and his inn.

CHAP. III.

Of a temptation that beset the muleteer on the road; what happened thereupon; and how Gil Blas fell out of the frying-pan into the fire.

I Was not the only person that travelled with the muleteer: there were two lads of Penafier, a little quixister of Mondonedo, who went from place to place to find where they would hire him, and a young man of Astorga, who was returning home with a girl he had lately married at Verco. We were presently acquainted, and told one another whence we came, and whither we were going. The bride, though she was young, was so ugly, and so fluttish, that I took no great delight in looking upon her: nevertheless her youth and her size, which was not of the smallest, rendered her agreeable in the eyes of the muleteer, who resolved to do his utmost to gain her good graces. He spent the day in contriving how to effect it, and adjourned the execution of it till night. Our muleteer rested at Cacabelos, and put up at the first inn we came to, which was more in the country than in the town. The man of the house was, it seems, a discreet, complaisant person, and at the muleteer's request he shewed us to a room apart from the rest of the inn, where we ordered supper to be brought us. When we had almost supped, the muleteer entered the room, and cried, "Sdeath, I am robbed: I had a hundred pistoles in a leather-bag; I'll have them again, I warrant you. I am going to the magistrate of the town, who won't make it a jesting matter, but will put every man of you to the torture, till you confess the crime, and restore the money." Saying this very seriously, he left us all in a terrible consternation. We did not imagine it was a feint of his. We knew nothing
of

of one another. I suspected the quirister had done the feat, and perhaps he suspected the same of me. We were not acquainted with the formalities practised on the like occasions. We doubted not but we should indeed be racked; and being also extremely terrified, we shifted every one for himself: some ran into the streets, others into the garden: all of us endeavouring to save ourselves by flight; and the young man of Astorga, who was in as great a fright as any of us, made his escape, like another *Æneas*, not mattering what became of his wife. The muleteer, as I learned afterwards, was overjoyed that this stratagem succeeded so well, and went to brag of his artifice to the bride, intending to take hold of the opportunity it had given him. But this *Lucretia* of the *Asturias*, whose virtue was fortified by the deformity of her temper, made a vigorous resistance, and cried out so loud, that she was heard by the watch, who by chance were coming that way; and the inn being a house of no good fame, stept to hearken what passed there. They entered in upon hearing a noise, and demanded what was the matter? The inkeeper was in the kitchen, and whistled as if he knew not what was doing; but the watch obliged him to shew them to the room where the noise was made. They came at the nick of time, for the woman could hold out no longer. The officer who commanded the watch no sooner saw what the muleteer was about, than he fell upon him with his staff, and rated him in terms as impudent as the action which was the occasion of them. That was not all; he seized the criminal, and carried him before the magistrate, together with the woman who had been assaulted. She not minding the disorder the carrier had put her into, so eager was she to have justice of him. The magistrate examined her, and having considered the matter, thought the offender was unworthy of a pardon.

He

He ordered him to be stripped, and whipped in his presence; and that if the woman's husband was not forthcoming the next day, two bailiffs, at the cost and charges of the defendant, should carry the plaintiff to Astorga.

For my part, I was more frightened than any of my fellow-travellers. I ran into the country, and traversed I do not know how many fields and heaths, leaping all the ditches I met in my way, till I came at last to a forest. I entered it, and hid myself under the thickest hedge. I had not been long there before two men a horseback came up to me: "Who is there?" cried they: and I being so afraid that I made them no answer, they drew nearer me, and clapped a pistol to my breast, commanding me to tell them who I was, whence I came, and what I was about, and charged me to conceal nothing from them. They questioned me so strictly, that I thought I was bound to answer them as sincerely as if the muleteer's threats were going to be put in execution, and the torture was before me. I told them I was a young man of Oviedo, going to Salamanca: I informed them of the fright I had been in, and that I had run away from the carrier for fear of the rack. They burst out a-laughing at this discourse, which shewed my simplicity; and one of them bade me have a good heart: "Come along with us, and be afraid of nothing, we will carry thee to a safe place." Saying this, he made me get up behind him, and rode away with me into the thickest of the forest.

I could not tell what to make of this rencounter. However, I did not think there was any thing ill in it. If these men were robbers, said I to myself, they would have robbed, and perhaps have murdered me. They must be some honest gentlemen of these parts, who, seeing me so frightened, took pity of me; and carried me with them out of charity. I was not long in an uncertainty: after several

veral turnings and windings we came to the foot of an hill, where we alighted. "We live here," says one of these cavaliers. I looked about to see where their dwelling should be, but could perceive neither house, nor hut, nor the least sign of an habitation. In the mean time the two men lifted up a huge trap-door, covered with earth and briars, which concealed the entrance of a long alley under ground. Their horses descended of themselves, as being used to it. The cavaliers obliged me to follow them. They then tied down the trap-door with ropes which were fastened to it on purpose: and thus was my uncle's hopeful nephew caught like a mouse in a mouse-trap.

C H A P. IV.

A description of the habitation under ground, and what Gil Blas saw there.

I THEN found out what sort of men I was got amongst, and one may imagine that my present fear could vie with that which the muleteer had put me into. I had now more reason to be afraid. I gave my ducats and my life for gone, I looked upon myself as a victim leading to slaughter, and followed them where-ever they led me, like a person who hardly knew whether he was alive or dead. After we had gone about 200 paces in this subterranean labyrinth, descending still as we went, we came to a stable where hung two great iron lamps fixed to the ceiling, and always burning to light the place. There was good store of hay and oats, and room for twenty horses; but there were then no more than the two that we brought with us. An old negro, who seemed to have quite lost his vigour, took them, and tied them to the manger.

We left the stable, and by the light of some other lamps, which served, as one would think, to shew the horror of the place, we arrived at a kitchen,

kitchen, where an old woman was roasting some meat, and preparing for supper; the kitchen was adorned with all necessary utensils; and adjoining to it was an office furnished with all sorts of provisions. The cook, to give you her picture, was a person upwards of sixty. In her youth her hair was of a deep sandy colour, as might be seen by part which was not turned gray, and retained still its former hue; her chin was long and peaked; she was blobber-lipped; her nose large, of the aquiline kind, and advancing toward her chin; her eyes of a fine purple red.

"Here, Dame Leonarda," says one of the cavaliers, presenting me to that angel of darkness, "here is a young man we have brought you." He then turned about to me, and observing I looked pale, and trembled, he again bade me not be afraid, for they would do me no harm, adding, "We want a servant to assist our cook: we happened to light upon thee, and thou wilt have cause to rejoice at it: thou shalt here supply the place of a lad that died fifteen days ago: he was a sickly youth; thou seemest to be lusty, and wilt not die so soon. It is true, thou wilt not see the sun any more; but, to make amends, thou shalt have a good fire, and a full belly: thou shalt spend thy time with Leonarda, who is a very humane creature. Thou wilt want for nothing. I will shew thee that thou art not come among beggars. Come, follow me;" and taking a torch in his hand, led me into a cellar, where I saw a vast quantity of bottles and jars full, as he said, of excellent wine. He then carried me into several rooms, some full of silks, others of stuff, others of linen; in others, there were vessels of silver and gold, in others brass, copper, and coarser metals. After this, I followed him into a large hall, where were three copper sconces, with candles burning. There were other rooms joining to this,
and

and lights in every one of them. He demanded of me, as we went along, what my name was, and why I left Oviedo? When I had satisfied him; he cried " Well, Gil Blas, since you have quitted your country to get a place, thank your stars that you have got so good a one. It was a happy thing for thee that thou mettest with us: thou wilt have plenty of all things here, and roll in silver and gold: besides, thou canst here come to no harm. This subterranean dwelling is so safe, that the officers of St. Hermandad may come a hundred times into the forest, and not find it out; nobody but myself and my comrades know the entrance into it. Perhaps thou wilt ask me how we could make it, and the inhabitants of the neighbourhood never discover us; thou must learn therefore that it is no work of ours; it was made along time ago. After the Moors became masters of Granáda, Aragon, and almost all the rest of Spain, the Christians, who would not submit to the yoke of the infidels, fled hither, and concealed themselves in Biscay and the Asturias, whither the brave Don Pelagio retired. Being thus scattered up and down in small companies, they lived in mountains and woods, some in caves, and some in such subterranean vaults as these are. When afterwards they had the good fortune to drive their enemies out of Spain, they returned to the cities; since which time their retreats have served for an asylum to men of our profession. It is true, St. Hermandad * has discovered and destroyed some of them; but, thank heaven, there are some left still. I have lived in this place securely these fifteen years. My name is *Captain Rolando*; I am the chief of a band, and the man thou sawest with me is one of them."

* The holy brotherhood in Spain, called *La Santa Hermandad*, was formerly an association to suppress robbers, in times of civil commotion; and at this day is an establishment kept up through all Spain, for the same purpose.

CHAP. V.

Of the arrival of several other robbers in the habitation under ground, and the pleasant discourse they had together.

AS Signior Rolando had done speaking, there appeared six new faces in the hall, the lieutenant and five men more of the band laden with plunder. They brought with them two bags full of sugar, cinnamon, pepper, figs, almonds, and dried raisins: the lieutenant addressed himself to the captain, and told him he had just taken those two bags from a grocer of Benavento, whose mule also became his prise. After which he gave an account of his expedition to the steward; and the booty taken from the grocer was deposited in the office.

The next thing to be done was to make merry. The cloth was laid in the hall; I was sent into the kitchen, and instructed how I was to employ myself by dame Leonarda. There was no help for it; I must do what she bid me; and making a virtue of necessity, I put the best face I could upon it, and went about the work she set me upon.

I put every thing in order in the buffet; I placed there the plate that was wanted, and stowed it with bottles of that excellent wine which Rolando boasted of. I then served up two ragouts, and the cavaliers immediately seated themselves at the table. They all fell to with keen appetites, and I stood behind them to fill out wine. I did it with so good a grace, that I was complimented by them in an extraordinary manner. The captain in few words told them my story, which very much diverted them. He closed all with saying, I was a lad of merit. I could very well have been without their praises, but they had never enough of it. They said I seemed to be born to be their butler, and was

was worth a hundred of my predecessors. Dame Leonarda had the honour of presenting nectar to these infernal gods, ever since his death ; but they now deprived her of so glorious an employment, to bestow it upon me ; and I, like another Gany-mede, succeeded this old Hebe.

The ragouts being dispatched, I carried in several dishes of roast meat : the robbers eating heartily of them, as they had done of the ragouts, became at last pretty well satisfied ; they drank in proportion to their eating, and grew very glad, and very noisy. They talked all at a time : one began a story, another told a jest ; one shouted, another sung : they knew not what each other said. Which made Captain Rolando, who had in vain endeavoured to have the best part of the talk, assume an air of authority, and impose silence on the rest of the company. “ Gentlemen,” said he, “ hearken to what I have to say to you : Let us not deafen one another by talking all together ; would it not be better to discourse like reasonable men ? A thought is come into my head. Since we associated ourselves together, we never had the curiosity to enquire into each other’s families, and how we came to take upon us this profession : methinks it is a thing we should not be ignorant of : let us tell our adventures to divert us. The lieutenant and the rest, as if they had something fine to relate, accepted of the captain’s propositions with great demonstrations of joy ; and the captain himself spoke first in the following terms.

“ You must know, Gentlemen, that I was the only son of a rich citizen of Madrid. There was no end of the rejoicings in our family on the day of my nativity. My father, who was stricken in years, was overjoyed to have an heir to his estate, and my mother undertook to give me suck herself : My grandfather by my mother’s side was then living : he was an honest old fellow, who minded
nothing

nothing but saying his rosary, and boasting of his military exploits, for he had borne arms a long time. I became insensibly the idol of these three persons: they always had me in their arms: and lest studying should fatigue me too much in my younger years, they suffered me to spend them in the most childish amusements. Children, said my father, should not apply themselves to any thing too seriously; they should stay till their judgments are riper. Waiting for this ripeness, I grew up without being able to read or write. But I did not however lose my time; my father taught me a thousand little plays. I could manage a pack of cards as well as any body; I understood dice too; and my grandfather told me romances of the several warlike enterprises wherein he had been concerned: he every day filled my head with them, and made me repeat verses on so fine a subject, which I did very exactly, and for which my parents admired my memory: they were as well pleased with my wit, when I would break in upon their discourse, and say any thing that came uppermost. What a rare boy he is? my father would cry with a look full of content. My mother overwhelmed me with her caresses, and my grandfather wept for joy. I did whatever I would before them; they forgave me, let it be never so indecent. They even adored me. I was thirteen years of age before they thought of getting a master for me: they then provided one, but they gave him a strict charge not to touch me. They permitted him to threaten me a little sometimes, to make me afraid. This permission was of no great use; for either I made a jest of his threats, or with tears in my eyes went to complain to my mother or my grandfather of my preceptor's ill usage. It was to no purpose for the poor devil to excuse himself. He always passed for a brute with them, and they were sure to take my word before his. One day I scratched myself

myself, and then cried out as if he had done it. My mother ran in, and drove him out of the house immediately, tho' he protested and called heaven to witness, that he had not touched me.

Thus did I get rid of all my preceptors, till I met with one of my own liking, a bachelor of arts of Alcala, an excellent master for the heir of a family: he loved women gaming and wine: I could not have fallen into the hands of a person more to my humour. He, in the first place, endeavoured to gain me over to him by humouring me in all things. He succeeded, and by that means got the love of my parents, who abandoned me entirely to his conduct. He betimes instructed me in the knowledge of the world. He carried me with him to all the houses of pleasure which he haunted. He instilled into me the same love for it as he had himself; and excepting Latin he taught me every thing that he himself knew. As soon as he saw I had no farther occasion for his precepts, he went away, and offered his service elsewhere.

Though I was used in my infancy to a very free way of living, it was nothing to what I was when I became master of my own actions. I every moment turned my father and mother into ridicule: they bore it all in good part, and the more wicked I was, the more they took me to be pleasant. There was no kind of debauchery which I was not guilty of: my companions were all of the same make: and as our parents did not give us money enough to continue so delicious a life, every one of us stole from them all we could lay our hands on; which not answering our occasions, we began to rob at nights. The corregidor unhappily got intelligence of us; he resolved to apprehend us; but we had notice of his mischievous design. We ran for it, and entered upon exploits on the highway; since which, Gentlemen, I have had the good fortune

fortune to continue in my profession many years, in spite of the perils that attend it."

Here the captain ended his relation, and the lieutenant began his. "An education, Gentlemen, quite opposite to that of Signior Rolando, produced the very same effect. My father was a butcher of Toledo; he passed, and with good reason, for the greatest brute in that city; and my mother was every whit as ill-natured as he. They whipt me when I was a child, and strove who should do it to me most. I daily was turned up ten or twenty times: the least fault I committed, had the severest punishment: it was in vain to sit down on my knees, and beg pardon, to promise with tears in my eyes, that I would do so no more: they never would forgive me, and very often chastised me though I did not deserve it. When my father beat me, my mother, as if he had not done as much as he ought to do, would be sure to have a hand in it, and set him on, instead of interceding for me. This usage gave me such an aversion to the house, that I left it before I was fourteen years old. I begged my way through Arragon to Saragossa, where I associated myself with some beggars, who lived a merry life enough. They taught me to counterfeit a blind man, a cripple, a lazar, and several other parts proper to procure alms. We every morning acted them over, as players rehearse their comedies. Each of us knew his part by day, and at night we all met again, and spent together what the charity of pious Christians had given us. In time I grew weary of living with those wretches, and endeavoured to join myself to a company of a higher order, such as lived by their industry. They shewed me a hundred tricks; but we could not stay long at Saragossa, having unluckily had a quarrel with one of the magistrates, who was of intelligence with us, and always protected us. Each of us went his way. As for me, I entered myself

myself in a bold troop of adventurers, who raised contributions from travellers; and I liked their way of living so well, that I resolved to think of no other. I am therefore, Gentlemen, very much obliged to my parents for using me so ill as they did; for if they had been kinder to me, I had doubtless been a sorry butcher at this time, whereas I have now the honour to be your lieutenant."

"These stories, Gentlemen," says a young robber, who sat between the captain and the lieutenant, "are not so extraordinary, nor so curious as mine. I was the son of a peasant in the neighbourhood of Seville. Three weeks after I was born, my mother, a young, handsome, neat woman, had a nursery proposed to her, the only son of a man of quality in Seville, of about my age. My mother accepted of the proposal: she went and fetched the child, which, as soon as she brought home, she observed to be something like me. Upon this she took a resolution to make me pass for the child of quality, in hopes that I would one time or other reward her for it. My father, whose conscience was not more delicate than any other peasant's, approved of the cheat. Thus, after she had changed our cloaths, she put out the son of Don Rodriguez de Herrera to another nurse, under my name, and nursed me herself under his.

Whatever might be said of instinct and the strength of blood, the parents of the little gentleman were easily imposed upon: they did not in the least suspect the trick that was played them; and I was never out of their arms till I was seven years of age. Their intention was to render me a perfect cavalier: they provided me masters of all kinds; but I had no manner of inclination to the exercises they taught me, nor any more disposition to learn the sciences in which they would have instructed me. I had much rather play with the footman

and groom, whom I every moment followed into the kitchen and stables. But play was not long my predominant passion; I learned to drink before I was seventeen, and fell upon all the women that came in my way. I particularly was very fond of a servant-maid in the kitchen, who seemed to me to be the most amiable of them all: she was a jolly merry wench; and I made love to her so openly, that Don Rodriguez took notice of it. He reproved me sharply, upbraiding me with the baseness of my inclinations; and lest the sight of the beloved object should render his remonstrances useless, he turned my princess out of doors.

I was mightily displeased at it, resolved to be revenged, robbed Don Rodriguez's wife of all her jewels, and ran after my fair Helen, who retired to a washer-woman's house of her acquaintance: I took her thence at noon-day, that every body might know it; and not satisfied with this, I carried her into her own country, where I solemnly married her, as well to spite Herrera as to set a fine example for other children of quality. Three months after I was married, I heard that Don Rodriguez was dead; which news was, I thought, the best I ever heard in my life: I immediately repaired to Seville to demand possession of his estate. But, alas! the case was altered; my mother was dead too, and on her deathbed she confessed to the curate of the parish the trick she had put upon Don Rodriguez, whose son had already filled my place, or rather his own; and every one was the more pleased with the discovery of his birth, that I had given so little hope of turning out well. By this means finding myself left destitute, and having no great fancy for my fat spouse, I took to the company of some knights of fortune, with whom I began my exploits on the road."

The young robber having finished his story, another said, He was the son of a merchant of Burgos;

gos; that he rashly took orders in his youth, and apostatised some years after. In fine, the eight robbers talked every one of his birth in their turn; and when I had heard them all speak, I was not surprised to meet them all together. They afterwards turned their discourse, and debated several projects for the next campaign: they concluded to prosecute one of them; and it being late, went all to sleep in their several chambers. I followed the captain into his, where while I helped to undress him, "Thou seest," said he, "Gil Blas, how we live here: we are always merry; we have neither hatred or envy among us, nor ever had we the least quarrel: we agree better than monks in a convent: thou art going, child, to live a pleasant life of it. I do not take thee to be such a fool as to make any scruple of living with robbers. Who are there in the world that are not such? every man loves to take another man's goods from him; this sentiment is general; the manner of doing it is only different: for example, conquerors seize the territories of their neighbours; persons of quality borrow, and never pay; bankers, brokers, and all sorts of tradesmen, as well great as small, are not very scrupulous in this point. I will not say any thing of the lawyers; their practices are well enough known. However, it must be owned, they are more innocent than we; for we often take away the lives of the innocent, and they sometimes save the guilty."

C H A P. VI.

Of an attempt of Gil Blas to make his escape, and what was the success of it.

AFTER the captain of the robbers had made this apology for his profession, he went to bed; and I returned to the hall, where I cleared the table, and put every thing in order. I then

went into the kitchen, where Domingo, so the old negro was called, and dame Leonarda were at supper, expecting me to come to them. Though I had no stomach, I sat down with them; I could eat nothing; and my looks shewed that I was as much afflicted as I had reason to be. Those two equivalent figures endeavoured to comfort me. "Why are you troubled, child?" says the old woman; "you ought rather to rejoice at your being here; you are young and easy; you would soon have been ruined had you lived in the world; you would have met with a parcel of libertines, who would have engaged you in all manner of debauchery, whereas your innocence will here be safe." "Dame Leonarda is in the right," says the old negro, very gravely; "besides, there is nothing but trouble in the world: come, friend, thank heaven that you are at once delivered from all the perils, cares, and afflictions of life." I hearkened to them with seeming attention: for it signified nothing to do otherwise. Domingo, after he had plentifully eaten and drank, retired to his stable. Leonarda took also a lamp and conducted me to a vault which the robbers made use of for a burying-place, when any of their fellows died a natural death: I there spied a pallet, which looked more like a tomb than a bed. "This is your chamber," says she; "the lad, whose place it is your good fortune to fill, lay there as long as he lived, and some time after he was dead. He was such a fool as to die in the flower of his age: don't you be so silly as to follow his example." Saying this, she gave me the lamp, and returned to the kitchen. I set the lamp upon the ground, I flung myself on the pallet, not so much to sleep, as to give myself up entirely to my reflections. O heaven what a terrible fate has befallen me! cried I: I am not only doomed never to see the light of the sun more; but, as if it were not enough to be buried

alive at eighteen years old, I am also reduced to serve thieves by day, and to spend the night with the dead! these mortifying thoughts made me burst out into tears. I a hundred times cursed my uncle's desire to send me to Salamanca. I repented that I ran away from the magistrate at Cacabelos. I would gladly have been racked, to have got above ground again. But considering that bemoaning myself thus, was all in vain. I bent my thoughts to contrive the means to escape. Is it impossible, said I to myself, to get out from hence? the robbers are asleep; the cook and the negro will be the same presently. While they are sleeping, cannot I with this lamp find out the alley by which I descended into this hell? It is true I do not believe I am strong enough to lift up the trap door; but let me try, I will not have any blame lie on me that I did not what I could to escape. Despair will lend me strength, and perhaps I may accomplish it.

Thus did I form this great design, and rose, when I thought Leonarda and Domingo were fast asleep. I took the lamp, and went out of the vault, recommending myself to all the saints in paradise. It was not without much difficulty that I found out all the turnings and windings of this new labyrinth. I arrived, in the end, at the gate of the stable, and at last perceived the alley I was in quest of. I marched on, and advanced towards the trap-door with as much nimbleness as joy. But alas! in the middle of the alley I met with a cursed grate, well fastened, and the bars so close, a man could hardly put his hand through. I was sadly vexed at this obstacle, which I had not observed as we entered. I handled the bars, I examined the lock, I endeavoured to break it open; when on a sudden I felt on my shoulders half a dozen lusty bangs of a bull's pizzle; I cried out, so that all the vault rang with it; and looking behind me, saw the old negro in his shirt, with a dark lantern in one hand, and the
instrument

instrument of my correction in the other. "So, so, you young rascal you," cried he, "you would get out, would you? do not think you can be too hard for me. I heard you; you thought the grate was open. Believe me, friend, you shall hereafter find it always shut. When we keep any one here against his mind, he must be cunninger than you if he can escape us."

In the mean time, my crying out so awakened two or three of the robbers, who not knowing whether it was not the St. Hermandad that was coming down upon them, got up and awoke their comrades: they rose all in an instant, and came running almost naked to the place where I was with Domingo. But as soon as they understood what was the matter, their concern was converted into laughter. "How, Gil Blas," said the apostate robber, "thou hast not been here six hours yet, and wouldst thou be gone already? what wouldst thou do, if thou wert to be a monk? go get thee to bed, thou shalt be forgiven this time, in consideration of the blows of Domingo's bull's pizzle; but if thou dost ever make another such attempt, by St. Bartholomew, we will flay thee alive." At these words he retired. The other robbers returned also to their chambers. The old negro betook himself to his stable again, very well pleased with his expedition; and I went back to my burying place, where I passed the rest of the night in sighing and weeping.

CHAP. VII.

What Gil Blas did, when he could do no better.

I THOUGHT I should have died of the grief which seized me, and continued several days after my fruitless attempt to escape; I could hardly hold up my head, or stand on my feet; but at last my good genius inspired me with a resolution

to dissimble. I affected to seem less melancholy, I began to laugh and sing, though I had no manner of mind to it. In a word, I put such a constraint upon myself, that Leonarda and Domingo were deceived by it. They believed that use had made the cage familiar to the bird. The robbers were of the same opinion. I assumed a gay air when I filled out their wine for them, and put in a word now and then among them, when I could do it to divert them. They were pleased with the freedom I took. "Gil Blas," said the captain, one evening when I had been very pleasant, "thou didst well to banish melancholy; I am charmed with thy humour, and thy wit: we do not know people at first; I did not take thee to have so much wit, and so much good humour."

The rest of them spoke mightily in praise of me. They appeared so well disposed towards me, that I resolved to take hold of that occasion, and said, Gentlemen, let me speak my mind to you: since my being here, I find I am quite another creature; you have cured me of the prejudices of education; I have insensibly acquired your sentiments and a liking to your profession. I long to have the honour of being one of your brethren, and to share with you in the perils of your expeditions. All the company applauded this discourse; they extolled my good-will, and resolved unanimously that I should serve a while to make trial of my vocation, and afterwards be admitted into the band. In hopes of so honourable a preferment, I continued to put a force upon my inclinations, and to exercise my employment of butler. It was an extreme mortification to me to stay where I was; for I had no ambition to become a robber, only to have an opportunity by it to get out of the vault where I was confined, in hopes to make my escape from them. These hopes kept me alive: I was often tired with waiting; and more than once endeavoured

voured to surprise Domingo's vigilance, but there was no way of doing it, he was too much upon his guard: I would have defied a hundred Orpheuses to charm this Cerberus. Indeed I was so afraid of rendering myself suspected, that I did not do what I could to deceive him. He watched me, and I was obliged to act very warily, that I might not betray myself. I adjourned therefore all thoughts of getting out, till the appointed time for my reception into the troop; and I waited for it as impatiently as if I was then to be admitted among the knights of the order.

The time, thank heaven, came, six months after, when Signior Rolando addressed himself thus to his comrades. "We must keep our words, Gentlemen, with Gil Blas; I have no ill opinion of that lad: I believe we shall make something of him; I think we had best let him go with us to-morrow to gather laurels on the highway. We will take it upon ourselves to breed him up in the way to glory. The robbers joined all in with him; and to shew me that they already looked upon me as one of their companions, they dispensed with my waiting upon them. They restored to dame Leonarda the post they had taken from her in my favour. They made me throw aside my habit, which was only a thread bare frock, and equipped me out with the spoils of a gentleman whom they had lately robbed. After which I prepared myself for my first campaign.

C H A P. VIII.

Gil Blas accompanies the robbers. An exploit of his on the high way.

IT was about day-break, in the month of September, that I sallied out of our subterranean dwelling with the robbers. I was armed like them, with a carabine, two pistols, a sword and bayonet,

and mounted on a pretty good horse, which they took from the same gentleman whose cloaths I wore. I had so long lived in darkness, that the light dazzled my eyes; but by degrees I could bear it.

We passed by Ponferrada, and posted ourselves in ambush in a little wood near the high road to Leon. We were there waiting for some good booty, when we spied a monk of the order of St. Dominique, mounted, contrary to the rules of that order, on a sorry mule. "Heaven be praised," cried the captain, smiling; "this is a masterpiece for Gil Blas: he must dismount the monk; let us see how he will do it." "All the robbers agreed I was very fit for that commission; and they exhorted me to behave myself in the execution of it. "I will please you, gentlemen," said I to them; "I will strip the priest to his skin, and bring you his mule hither." "No, no," replied Rolando, "it is not worth while: bring us only his Reverence's purse; that is all we require of you." Upon which I rode out of the wood: I came up with the monk, praying heaven to forgive the wicked action I was about. I would gladly have made my escape then; but the greatest part of the thieves were better mounted than I; if they had perceived that I fled, they would quickly have been at my heels, and have either carried me back with them, or have discharged their garabines at me, which I did not care to hazard, the step was too delicate. I demanded the priest's purse as soon as I drew near him: I held my pistol to his breast to shew I was in earnest. He stood short to take a view of me, and did not seem at all afraid. "Child," says he, "you are very young; you begin this rogue's trade betimes." "Father," said I, "as bad as it is, I wish I had begun it sooner." "Ah, son," replied the good man, who did not understand my meaning, "what dost thou say? how blind art thou!"

thou ! suffer me to lay before thee thy wretched condition." " Father," said I, interrupting him, " no preaching, I beseech you ; I don't use the highway to hear sermons ; I want money." " Money !" cried the monk, in a surprise : you have an ill opinion of the charity of the Spaniards, if you imagine that persons of my character have occasion of money when they travel in Spain. Be not deceived, we are entertained wherever we come, we are lodged, we are fed ; and all that is required of us in return, is our prayers. In short, we never carry money on the road with us : we give ourselves up to providence." No, no," replied I, " you do not always give yourselves up to it ; you have sometimes good pistoles about you to make you the more sure of providence : father, let us have done ; my comrades, who are in this wood, expect my return with impatience. Fling your purse on the ground this minute, or I will kill you."

I pronounced these words with so threatening an air, that the priest began to be afraid of his life. " Stay," says he, I will do as you would have me, since it must be so ; I perceive that rhetorical figures have no force with such men as you are." Saying this, he pulled a great shamoy purse out from under his gown, and threw it upon the ground. I then bade him go on, which he did not give me the trouble to repeat. He pricked his mule's sides ; and the beast doing much better than I thought she could, (for I took her to be such another as my uncle's), answered very well the haste he was in to get out of sight. When he was at some distance, I alighted, and took up the purse, which was weighty ; I mounted my horse again, and made as fast as I could to the robbers, who were impatient to felicitate me on my victory : they would scarce give me time to alight, so hasty were they to embrace me. " Courage, Gil Blas," says Rolando, " thou hast done wonders ; I had my

eye upon thee all the while ; I observed thy countenance ; I foretold that thou wilt make an excellent man for the road." The lieutenant and the rest of them applauded the prediction, and assured me that I could not fail of accomplishing it. I thanked them for the high idea they had of me, and promised them to do my utmost to deserve it.

After they had praised me so much more than belonged to me, they wanted to examine the booty I had brought them. " Let us see," cried they, " what the monk had in his purse." " It must be well stored," said one of them, " for those Reverend fathers do not generally travel like pilgrims." The captain untied the purse, opened it, and took out of it three or four handfuls of little copper medals, intermixed with *Agnus Dei's*, and some crucifixes. At the sight of such an uncommon prize, all the thieves fell into an immoderate fit of laughter. " We are mightily obliged to *Gil Blas*," said the lieutenant : " his first booty is a very salutary one." This jest was the occasion of many others : those rogues, particularly he who had apostatised, were very merry upon it ; they said a thousand things that shewed the wickedness of their morals : I was the only person who did not make a laughing matter of it. The raillery was all at my expense, which was enough to spoil my mirth, had I been so inclined : every one had a sting at me ; and the captain said, " Faith, *Gil Blas*, I advise thee to have no more to do with monks, they will be too cunning and too hard for thee."

C H A P. IX.

Of a serious adventure which followed that pleasant one.

WE staid almost all day in the wood, but met with no prize to make amends for our
balk

balk in the priest. In the evening we returned towards our dwelling under ground; the robbers diverted themselves all the way with my booty. At last we spied at a distance a coach and four mules. They drew nearer to us upon a full trot; and by the coach rode three men, who seemed to be very well armed. Rolando bid his band halt, to consult what was to be done. The robbers resolved to attack them: so we marched up to the coach in rank and file, prepared for a battle. Though I had been so highly complimented in the wood, I fell a-trembling, and was seized with a cold sweat all over me. My post happened to be unluckily in the front between the captain and the lieutenant; I supposed they contrived it so, to see how I would stand fire. Rolando observing in what a panic I was cast a sour look at me, and said surlily, "Mind me, Gil Blas, I give thee fair warning, if thou dost flinch, I will shoot thee through the head." I was too well satisfied that he would do as he said, not to take care of my behaviour; so I took a resolution to dare my fate, and recommended my soul to heaven. By this time the coach was got up with us; they perceived what sort of men we were, and what our design was: they stopped at twenty paces distance; they had carabines and pistols as well as we; and while they were preparing to receive us, there leaped out of the coach a gentleman richly dressed. He mounted a led horse, and put himself at the head of those that attended him. He had no arms but a sword and two pistols: there were nine of us and but four of them, the coachman sitting neuter in his box. They advanced towards us so daringly, that my fright redoubled upon it; however, though I shook hand and foot, I made ready to do as the rest did: to speak the truth, I was so afraid that I winked when I fired my carabine, and shot it off in such a manner, that I be-

lieve that I have nothing to repent of on that score

I will not enter into the particulars of the action: though I was by, I saw nothing; and my fear was so strong, that I did not see the horror of the fight that terrified me: all that I know is, that, after great firing on both sides, I heard my companions shout, and cry Victory! victory! upon which I took heart, and looking up saw the four men who defended the coach dead on the spot. On our side we lost only one man, the apostate, who met with a just punishment for his apostasy, and ridiculing religion in the priest's crucifixes: the lieutenant was wounded in the arm, but very slightly, the ball only razing the skin. Signior Rolando ran immediately to the coach-door: there was a lady in it of 24 or 25 years of age, who looked very lovely, notwithstanding the sad condition she was in: she swooned away during the combat, and was not recovered out of her swoon, when the captain came up to her. While he stood gazing upon her, we fell upon the plunder: the first thing we did was to secure the horses of the dead cavaliers; those animals frightened at the noise of the carabines and pistols, broke loose, and ran about without their riders, who were killed in the combat: the mules stood still all the time of the action, though the coachman quitted his box to save himself. We alighted off our horses, took the mules from the coach, and loaded them with several bundles and parcels which we found before and behind the coach. That done, the captain ordered us to take the lady, who was still in a sort of fit, and put her on horseback. Accordingly one of the robbers, who was best mounted, took her in his arms and seated her before him. We stripped the dead men, and left them with the coach in the highway, taking with us the lady, the mules, and the horses.

CHAP. X.

How the robbers treated the lady, Of a great design formed by Gil Blas, and what was the consequence of it.

ABOUT an hour after night we arrived at our subterranean habitation : we put the horses and mules up in our stable, and were forced to look after them ourselves : for the old negro had been a-bed three hours ; besides a violent fit of the gout which he had upon him, he was seized all over with a fit of the rheumatism. We left that wretch cursing and swearing, and went into the kitchen, where we carried the lady, and were every one of us very busy about her : we managed it so well, that we recovered her out of her swoon : but when she had her senses restored to her, and saw herself in the arms of several men who were strangers to her, she imagined how miserable she was and fell a-trembling. Whatever grief and despair could represent to her, appeared before her eyes, which she lifted to heaven, as if to upbraid it for the injury she was threatened with : these terrible ideas threw her into a second swoon ; her eyes shut ; and the robbers were afraid that death had deprived them of their prey. The captain thinking it more proper to leave her to herself, than to plague her with new relief from them, ordered her to be put upon Leonarda's bed, where she lay by herself, exposed to the insults of the most wicked of mortals.

We went thence into the hall, where one of the robbers who had been a surgeon, dressed the lieutenant's wound. We then examined our parcels and bundles, which we found full of all sorts of cloaths, linen, woolen, and silk ; and among the rest a bag of pistoles, which was very welcome to the gentlemen concerned. After this the cook laid the cloth, and brought in supper. All our discourse

discourse was of the great victory we had gained. Upon which Rolando addressed himself to me, and said, Thou must own, Gil Blas, thou wast in a dreadful fright." "I cannot deny it," replied I; "but when I have served two or three campaigns, you shall see what feats I will do." All the company took my part, and said, that for that time I should be excused; that it was a brisk action, and considering I was a young man, who had never stood fire before, I had come off pretty well. We then talked of the mules and horses we had taken; and it was resolved that we should all go the next day, before it was light, to Mansilla to sell them; for probably our expedition would not be heard of there by that time. When we had supped, we returned to the lady, whom we found as we left her: though she was in that condition, and seemed rather dead than alive, some of the robbers cast a profane eye upon her, and shewed their brutal lust, which they would have satisfied if Rolando had not hindered them, by representing that they ought at least to stay till the lady was recovered out of her fit, which her grief had thrown her into, and taken from her the use of her senses: the respect they bore for their captain, was a restraint upon their incontinence. Nothing else could have saved the lady; perhaps death itself had not been a defence for her honour. We again left that unfortunate woman in the same condition, Rolando charging Leonarda to take care of her and retired all to our chambers. As for me, as soon as I lay down, instead of sleeping, I could not help thinking on the misfortune of the lady; I did not doubt of her being a person of quality, and on that account thought her lot more deplorable. I trembled to consider the horrors that surround her, and was as much concerned for her as if she had been my relation or friend. In fine, after having pitied her heartily, I contrived how to deliver her from the danger she was in,

in, and carry her out of our under-ground habitation; I considered that the old negro could not stir; and that since his indisposition the cook kept the key of the grate: this made me form a project, which I immediately put in execution in the following manner.

I pretended to have the colic; and cried out as if I was in terrible pain. The robbers awoke, and presently came to me; they asked me why I made such a noise? I answered, I was racked with a fit of the colic; and to shew them that I was sincere, I made a hundred ugly faces, like a man in violent pain. I then lay still, as if the fit was over, and I somewhat easier. Presently after I rolled on my pallet, and twisted my arms as if the fit came up on me again: in a word, I acted my part so well, that, as cunning as they were. I imposed upon all of them, and they took me to be terribly tortured by my distemper. They were all very officious to assist me; one brought me a bottle of brandy, and made me drink half of it; another, whether I would or not, anointed me with the oil of sweet almonds; a third warmed a napkin, and clapt it burning hot to my belly. I in vain cried out, Hold: they imputed my cries to my colic, and made me continually endure real pain to ease me of a counterfeit one. At last, not being able to bear it any longer, I told them I was pretty well again, and begged them to have mercy upon me. They then gave over applying their remedies; and I took care how I complained again, for fear they should again torture me with their relief.

This scene lasted near three hours: after which the robbers supposing it was about the time they had resolved to go to Mansilla, prepared for that expedition. I made as if I would fain go with them, and was getting up, but they would not let me: "No, no," says Signior Rolando, "stay here, child, thou shalt go with us when thou art better
in

in health; the colic may now take thee again; thou canst not yet bear travelling." I did not think fit to insist farther upon going, lest they should have complied with my request; I only seemed to be very sorry I could not be one amongst them on that occasion: and I did so well, that they all went out of our subterranean dwelling, without the least suspicion of my design. When they were gone, as I heartily wished them, said I to myself, "Now, Gil Blas, is the time for thee to pluck up all thy resolution; take courage to finish what thou hast so happily begun. Domingo is not in a condition to oppose thy enterprise, and Leonarda cannot hinder thy executing it. Take hold of this opportunity to escape, thou wilt never have a more favourable one." These reflections emboldened me; I rose, took my sword and my pistols, and went first into the kitchen: but before I entered, I heard Leonarda talk, and stopped to listen, where she was endeavouring to comfort the strange lady, who being come to herself, and considering her misfortune, wept bitterly. "Ay, ay," says Leonarda, "weep on, sigh as much as you can, it will be some ease to you; the fit you were in was dangerous; but now it is over, there is nothing to fear: while you weep there is no danger: your grief will wear away by degrees; and you will like living with our gentlemen here, who are men of honour; they will treat you like a princess; they will be extremely fond of you, and doubtless you will grow as fond of them also: there is many a woman that would be glad to be in your place."

I did not give Leonarda time to proceed; I entered, and clapping a pistol to her breast, bade her give me the key of the grate. She was in a dreadful surprise; and though well advanced in years, she was too much in love with life to refuse my demand. When I had got the key, I addressed myself thus to the lady: Madam, heaven has sent you

you a deliverer: rise and follow me, I will conduct you whither you please to command me." The lady was not deaf to this offer. It made such an impression on her mind, that, recollecting all her strength, she arose, threw herself at my feet, and implored me to save her honour. I raised her up, and assured her, she might depend upon me. I then took some cords, which I spied in the kitchen, and with the lady's help tied Leonarda to the leg of a table, protesting that I would kill her if she made the least noise: I lighted a lamp, and went with the lady to the room, where was the robbers treasure of gold and silver: I put as many single and double pistoles in my pockets as they would hold, and obliged the lady to take what she could carry, representing to her that she only took what was her own. Having thus made a good provision for ourselves, we went to the stable, which I entered by myself, with my pistols cocked. I supposed that the old negro, as ill as he was of the gout and rheumatism, would not tamely let me saddle and bridle my horse, and resolved, if he resisted, to cure him of all his ails for ever. But as good luck would have it, his pains were at that time so violent, that I took the horse out of the stable without his perceiving it. The lady waited for me at the door: we soon passed through the alley that led to the grate, which we opened, and coming to the trap door, with much ado lifted it up. Had we not been strengthened by our great desire to escape, we should never have been able to have done it. Day began to break when we saw ourselves out of that abyss, from whence we endeavoured to get away as fast as we could. I mounted my horse, and took the lady behind me: we galloped along the first path we met with, and soon got out of the forest: we came to a plain, where were several roads; we took the first; and I was in a mortal dread lest it should lead to Man-

filla,

fills, and so meet Rolando and his comrades: but it happened that I was afraid without a cause; and about two o'clock in the afternoon we arrived at Astorga. I observed the people gazed at us, as at a novelty, to see a woman a-horseback behind a man. We alighted at the first inn we came to; and I immediately ordered a partridge and pheasant to be laid down to the fire. While my orders were executing, I conducted the lady to a chamber, where we entered into conversation, which we could not do on the road, because of the haste we made. She expressed herself to be extremely sensible of the obligation I had laid upon her, saying, she could not think that a person capable of so generous an action, was a companion of the rogues, out of whose hands I had delivered her. I told her my story, to confirm the good opinion she had conceived of me. By which she put confidence in me, and informed me of her misfortunes, as I am about to relate them in the following chapter.

CH A P. XI.

The story of Donna Mencia de Mosquera.

I WAS born at Valladolid; my name is *Donna Mencia de Mosquera*; my father Don Martin, after having spent almost all his patrimony in the service, was killed in Portugal at the head of a regiment which he commanded there. He left me so little fortune, that I was an indifferent match for any one, though I was an only daughter. However, as little as I had, I did not want lovers; for several of the most considerable gentlemen of Spain courted me, but I preferred Don Alvar de Mello to all of them. Indeed he was the handsomest man of them all, though that only would not have gained him the preference. He had wit, discretion, courage, and probity: besides, he had the character

character of the most gallant man of his time. If he made an entertainment, nothing could be more elegant: if he appeared at the jousts, his strength and his dexterity were admired by all: for these reasons I loved and married him.

A few days after our marriage, he met Don Andrea de Baesa, his rival, in a by-place; they quarrelled and drew. Don Andrea was killed, and he being the nephew of the corregidor of Valladolid, a violent and mortal enemy of the family of Mello. Don Alvar did not think himself safe in that city. He came home immediately, where, while his horse was getting ready, he told me what had happened: "My dear Mencia," said he, "we must part. You know the corregidor. Do not let us flatter ourselves. He will prosecute me to the utmost. You are not ignorant of his power, I shall not be safe in the kingdom." He was so troubled at our parting, and so grieved at my grief, that he could say no more. I made him take some jewels, and as much gold as he could carry with him. We then embraced, and for a quarter of an hour did nothing but mingle sighs and tears. Having notice that his horse was ready, he broke from my arms, and departed, leaving me in a condition which it is impossible to represent. Happy had I been, if my affliction had killed me at the instant. How much grief and pain had death then spared me! Some hours after Don Alvar's flight, the corregidor was informed of it, and ordered him to be pursued. He did his utmost to get him into his custody. My husband was too hard for him, and got into a place of security. Thus the magistrate was forced to content himself with the poor satisfaction of seizing the goods of a man whose blood he thirsted after; and he did that effectually. He left me scarce wherewith to subsist. Poor and pitiful was my condition. I had but one woman-servant to wait upon me. I spent all my days in weeping,

weeping, not for my poverty, which I bore patiently, but for the absence of my husband, whom I loved, but could hear no tidings of, though he had promised at parting, that he would carefully inform me of his lot, into whatever part of the world his evil stars might lead him. I had no news of him for seven years together, and not knowing what was become of him, lived in continual sorrow. At last I understood that he was killed in a battle, fighting for the king of Portugal in the kingdom of Fez: a man who came lately from Africa gave me an account of it, assuring me that he was perfectly well acquainted with Don Alvar de Mello; that he had served with him in the Portuguese army, and saw him fall in the action: to this he added some circumstances, which made me believe that my husband was dead.

About that time Don Ambrosio Mesia Carillo, Marquis de la Guardia, came to Valladolid. He was one of those old lords, who, by their polite and gallant behaviour, make women forget their age, and think them as taking as if they were in their youth still. One day some body told him the story of Don Alvar; and described me to him so favourably, that he had a mind to see me. He came to my lodgings, gave me a visit, and, though I was in so much grief took such a liking to me, that it turned into a tender passion. Perhaps indeed he pitied my sad and dismal condition, and pity very often converts itself into love: my mournful state touched him, and he told me more than once, he looked upon me as a prodigy of constancy, and even envied the fate of my husband in having such a faithful wife, though his end was so deplorable. In short, from the very first visit he made me, he resolved to marry me, if I would have him. He broke his mind to a relation of mine, who came to me, and represented to me, that my husband being killed in Fez, it was by no means

means reasonable that I should bury myself alive, and make my charms useless to my youth; that I had mourned long enough for a man with whom I had lived so little a while, and ought to take hold of the opportunity that was offered me to be the happiest woman in the world. She then set forth the Marquis's nobility, riches, and character. But all she said was lost upon me: I would not hearken to her: not that I made a doubt of Don Alvar's death, or was afraid of seeing him return on a sudden, when I least expected him. I had so little inclination to a second marriage, or rather so much repugnance to it, after I had been so unfortunate in my first, that I could not think of complying with my kinswoman's counsel. However, she did not give over persuading me: on the contrary, she grew daily a more zealous advocate for Don Ambrosio: she engaged all my relations in that old lord's interests: they all importuned me to accept of so advantageous a match. I was every minute teased by them; and my poverty, which increased upon me more and more, pleaded with them also, insomuch that I could resist no longer.

I gave way to their importunity, and at their pressing instances married the Marquis de la Guardia, who, the next day after we were married, carried me to a fine seat of his near Burgos, between Grajal and Rodillas. His love became more violent than ever; he studied to please me in every thing he did: he prevented my desires, and never did husband do more to gain the heart of a wife; never was lover more complaisant to a mistress. I should passionately have loved Don Ambrosio, notwithstanding the difference of our ages, if I could have loved any one but Don Alvar. But a constant heart can have but one passion. The remembrance of my first husband, rendered all the pains my second took to please me, ineffectual.

All

All the returns I made for his tenderness, were respect and gratitude.

In this disposition was I, when looking out of my window one day to take the air, I perceived a kind of peasant in the garden, who looked at me very attentively. I took him for an assistant to the gardener, and did not much mind him: but the next day looking out of the same window, I spied him in the same place again, and he seemed to look at me with more attention than before; which had such an effect upon me, that I examined his face too more curiously, and fancied I saw the features of the unhappy Don Alvar. This thought put me into a terrible apprehension of the truth of it. I cried out; by good fortune no body was then near me, but Ines my favourite woman. I told her what my thought was; she laughed at me, supposing some small likeness had imposed upon my sight. "Do not think it," Madam, said she; "what likelihood is there that your first husband should be in the garden, in the form of a peasant? can you believe him to be still in the land of the living? I will go down," added she, "and talk to this countryman. I will know who he is, and bring you an account of it in an instant." Accordingly she did so, and when she came back, I observed her to be in great disorder. "Madam," says she, "your suspicion was but too well grounded. It is Don Alvar himself, whom you saw. He made the discovery immediately, and desires to have some discourse with you."

The Marquis was then gone to Burgos; by which means I had an opportunity to receive Don Alvar, and ordered my woman to conduct him into my closet. You may imagine I was in the utmost confusion; I could not bear the sight of a man who had so much reason to upbraid me with inconstancy. I fell into a swoon when he entered the closet. Ines and he gave me all their assistance, and as I

came

came a little to myself, Don Alvar said, "I beg you, Madam, to recover yourself: do not let my presence incommode you. It is not my intention to give you the least trouble. I am not come like an enraged husband to demand an account of the faith you vowed to me, and to charge you with the crime of a second engagement contracted by you. I am not ignorant that it was your relations doing. I know how they persecuted you to consent to it: that it was reported and believed at Valladolid that I was dead, and that you yourself had good reason to think so, having received no letter from me to inform you of the contrary. In fine I know what manner of life you led after our cruel separation; and that necessity, rather than love, threw you into the arms of—" "Ah, my Lord," said I, interrupting him, "why will you excuse me? I am guilty, since you are alive. Oh that I was now in the same miserable condition that Don Ambrosio found me! Oh wretched marriage! I should otherwise, as miserable as I was, have had the comfort to meet you without blushing."

"Dear Mencia," replied he, with an air which shewed how much he was concerned at my grief, "I do not complain of you, and am very far from upbraiding you with the flourishing condition I find you in; I rejoice at it. Ever since I left Valladolid fortune has been against me: my life has been a continual series of misery; and nothing made me more miserable than the want of an opportunity to send you news of me, and to hear from you. I knew how you loved me, and had always in my mind the sad state to which that love had reduced you. I represented you to my eyes always in tears; and my concern for you was ever my greatest trouble: sometimes I blanted myself for having been the occasion of making you so wretched; and even wished that you had given yourself to one of my rivals, since your preferring me

me to them had cost you so dear. However, after seven years sufferings, and doting on you still as much as ever, I could not help desiring to see you; and having finished a long slavery, I went in this disguise to Valladolid, where I was like to be discovered. I there learned every thing: thence I came to this castle, found a way to come at the gardener, and entered myself in his service, in hopes that, as I wrought in the garden, I might have an opportunity to see you; but don't think that by my abode here I have the least design to interrupt your happiness. I love you more than I love myself. I am pleased to see you so happy, and the pleasure I shall take to reflect on the condition I leave you in, will be the only comfort of a life which I shall now spend far from you, and return no more to trouble your repose." "No, no, Don Alvar," cried I, at these words, "I will not suffer you to leave me a second time, I will go with you: nothing but death shall now part us." "Hearken to me," replied he, "live still with Don Ambrosio; let me be wretched by myself." A great many other things he said of the same nature; but the more ready he was to sacrifice himself for me, the less willing was I to let him. When he found that I was determined to go away with him, he on a sudden altered his tone, and looking very well pleased upon me, said, "Madam, since you still love Don Alvar so well, as to prefer his misery to the prosperity you enjoy here, we will go to Betancos, at the farther end of the kingdom of Galicia, where I have a secure retreat prepared for us. If my misfortunes have deprived me of all my estate, they have not also deprived me of all my friends: I have some left who have enabled me to carry you off with me. I have, by their assistance, got a coach ready at Zamora. I have bought mules, and am attended with three stout Galicians, armed with carabines and pistols: they

they wait my orders in the village of Rodillas: let us take hold of this occasion, the absence of Don Ambrosio: I will fetch the coach, and we will be gone this moment." I consented to his proposal. Don Alvar flew to Rodillas, and in a little while returned with his three Galicians. I was with my woman when he came with the coach: he took me in his arms, and put me into it. My woman ran away in a fright, Ines only staying near me; but she would not go along with us, because she was in love with one of Don Ambrosio's valets.

I carried off only my cloaths, and what jewels I had before my second marriage. I took nothing that belonged to the Marquis, or that he had given me. We travelled towards Galicia, under apprehensions of being pursued by Don Ambrosio. We continued our journey two days together without any opposition: we were in hopes to do the same the third; and were discoursing very agreeably of this adventure, and of what happened to Don Alvar in his absence; how he had been a slave five years; and what it was that occasioned the report of his death, when yesterday, on the road to Leon, we met the robbers who were with you. It was he you killed, and the three men were his Galicians: it is for him that these tears flow from mine eyes. Saying this, she burst out a weeping; and Gil Blas could not help bearing her company.

C H A P. XII.

How disagreeably Gil Blas and the lady were interrupted.

WHEN her grief permitted her to hear what I had to offer, I asked her what she intended to do in the present conjuncture? and as she was about to answer me, we were interrupted by a great noise in the inn. The corregidor was come thither with several serjeants, and other officers: they

they entered our chamber ; a young gentleman that was with them coming up to me, looked very curiously upon me ; and examining my dress, cried out, " By St. James, he has my coat on : it is he himself : take hold of him ; he has my horse too ; he is one of the thieves that lurk in this country." By this I understood that the young cavalier was the gentleman who had been robbed by them, and whose spoils I had unluckily equipped myself with. The corregidor, who, by my confusion, imagined that I was the person the gentleman took me for, and that the lady was an accomplice, sent us to separate prisons. This magistrate was not one of those whose frightful looks are death to a criminal : he had a soft smiling air, God knows if he was the better man for it. As soon as I was lodged in prison, he came thither attended by his officers ; the first thing they did, was to plunder me, according to custom. I was a fine booty for them ; they never had a better : as often as they dived into my pockets, I perceived their eyes sparkled with joy ; the corregidor could hardly contain himself. " Child," says he, " fear nothing ; we only do our duty : if you are innocent no harm will come to you." They were all the while emptying my pockets, and took from me even what the robbers paid more respect to, the forty ducats given me by my uncle. This did not satisfy them. They stripped me to my shirt, to see whether I had hid any thing between that and my skin. When they had thus done their duty, as they said, the corregidor examined me. I told him ingeniously all that had happened to me. He took my examination in writing. He then departed with his crew about him, and my money and goods in their custody, leaving me naked on some foul straw in the prison.

" What is human life !" cried I to myself, when I reflect on my forlorn state : " how full of crosses
and

and losses! I have met with nothing else since I left Oviedo: I am scarce got out of one peril, but another befalls me. I little thought when I arrived in this city that I should so soon become acquainted with the corregidor." I cursed the fatal coat as I put it on again, and the rest of the equipage that was left me which I brought from the robbers' subterranean dwellings. At last I encouraged myself with other reflections. "Have a good heart, Gil Blas," said I; "does it become thee to despair in a common jail, after thou hadst patience in thy dark confinement among the thieves? but alas, what signifies it to take courage? how can I get hence? they have deprived me of all means of procuring my liberty, by taking my money from me, without which a prisoner is like a bird whose wings are clipped."

Instead of the fowl I had ordered to the fire, they brought me some bread and water. I was fifteen days in my hole without seeing any body but the jailor, who gave me my allowance of that thin diet. I did what I could to have some discourse with him, but he would not speak a word with me. He came in and out, and would not often so much as look upon me. The sixteenth day the corregidor appeared, and said, "Rejoice, young man, I bring thee glad tidings; I have caused the lady that was with thee to be conducted to Burgos: I examined her before she went, and her answer will discharge thee. Thou shalt to-day have thy liberty, provided the muleteer, who, as thou saidst, brought thee from Penafier to Cacabelus, confirms thy deposition; he is now in Astorga, I will send for him. If he agrees in the article of the torture, I will discharge thee immediately." I was overjoyed to hear him talk thus. I did not doubt of my liberty, and thanked him for his readiness to do me speedy justice. I had hardly finished my compliment, when the muleteer entered to us, attended

by two serjeants. I presently knew him again; but the rogue having sold my portmanteau, and all that was in it, and fearing he should be obliged to make me satisfaction, if he owned that he knew me, said very impudently that he had never seen me in his life before. "Ah traitor," said I; "confess rather that thou hast sold my cloaths, and bear witness to the truth: look on me: I am one of the young men whom thou threatenedst with the torture at Cacabelos, and whom thou puttest in such a fright." The muleteer replied very gravely, he knew nothing of the matter; and persisting in disowning any knowledge of me, my deliverance was put off to some other time. Patience was to be my cure again: the jailor's bread and water my diet. It was an intolerable thing to be there without having committed the least crime. But what help was there for it? I wished I had staid underground still: I was more at ease there, said I to myself, than in this prison; I fared well with the robbers; we lived merrily, and I comforted myself still with hopes of escaping, whereas, innocent as I am, perhaps the best of my fortune will be to be let out hence, to go to the galleys.

C H A P. XIII.

By what chance Gil Blas was delivered out of prison, and whither he went.

WHILE I was spending my time upon these reflections, the story of my adventures, as it was contained in my deposition, was reported about the town, several persons came out of curiosity to see me: they stood one after another at a little window, by which the light came into my prison; and when they had gazed at me some time, they marched their way. I was surpris'd at this novelty: I had not till then seen a mortal at the window since my confinement. I imagined that I

was

was talked of in the city ; and could not tell whether it was for the better or the worse.

One of those that came to see me, happened to be the little quirister of Mondonedo, who, as well as I, had been afraid of the rack, and taken to his heels to avoid it. I knew him, and he knew me : we saluted one another, and entered afterwards into a long conversation. I was obliged to give him a full account of all my adventures ; and he told me what passed in the inn at Cacabelos between the muleteer and the young woman : in short, he informed me of every thing I have said concerning it ; and promised, when he took leave of me, that he would that minute go and labour for my deliverance. Then every body who came to my window out of curiosity, as well as he, expressed themselves to have pity on my sufferings, and assured me they would join with him in endeavouring to procure my liberty.

They were as good as their word : they spoke to the corregidor on my behalf. That magistrate made no more doubt of my innocence, especially after he had heard what the quirister had to say. Three weeks after he appeared in my prison again, and said, " Gil Blas, not to keep thee in pain, thou mayst go whither thou wilt. But tell me, dost thou think, if we send some serjeant and others with thee to the forest, thou couldst find out that habitation under ground ! " No, my Lord," replied I ; " it was night always when I entered it, and never came out but before day : it is impossible for me to discover it." Then the corregidor left me, saying he would order the jailor to open the prison doors for me. The jailor and his turnkey entered my hole soon after ; and having taken from me the little I had left, which they liked better than their own, they exchanged cloaths with me ; and turned me out of the prison by the head and shoulders. I was ashamed to be

seen in the rags they had given me instead of my cloaths; and my confusion lessened the joy prisoners have usually when they are set at liberty.

I would fain have gone out of town, and avoided being gazed at by the people; but my gratitude would not let me go, without taking leave of the quirister, to whom I was so much obliged. I went and returned him my thanks: he could not help laughing at seeing me. "You have fared very indifferently," says he, "in the hands of justice." "I do not complain of it," replied I: "justice is always right; I wish only that the officers that belonged to it were honest men. I think they should at least have let me have my cloaths: they would have been well enough paid by my money. "Very true," said he; "but it seems the formalities of their office required it, and they call it doing their duty. How, I pray, do they do this duty of theirs? is the horse you had restored to the right owner? no surely, he is now in the serjeant's stable that took him from you, to be a proof of the robbery there: the poor gentleman that owns it will not, I believe, have so much as the crupper restored to him. But to say no more of this; what do you intend to do?" I have a mind," replied I, to go to Burgos, and find out the lady whom I delivered out of the hands of the robbers: she will give me some pistoles; I will buy me a new gown, and go to Salamanca, where I hope to make something of my Latin: the worst of it is, it is a great way to Burgos, and I have nothing to maintain me on the road. "I understand you," said my companion, "my purse is at your service; it is a little low indeed, but we will do as well as we can with it." Saying this, he pulled it out of his pocket, and gave it me with so good a grace, that I could not refuse accepting of it, such as it was; and gave him a thousand thanks, and promised to be always ready to do as much for him, when it lay in my way, which it never did.

I took my leave of him, and departed from the city without visiting the other persons who had contributed to my deliverance. I contented myself with heartily wishing them well. My friend's purse was, as he said, a little low. It was well for me that I had lately been used to a very frugal way of living. I could not have made it hold out else. I was so good a husband that I had some reals left me when I arrived at Ponte de Mula, which is not far from Burgos: I went into an inn, and was accosted by the hostess. She was an ugly scolding dame; and I perceived she did not like me by my appearance. I mattered it not, sat down, and called for some bread and cheese. The wine they brought me was detestable. While I was eating, I would fain have entered into conversation with my landlady; I desired her to tell me if she knew the Marquis de la Guardia; if his seat was near: and what she heard of the Marchioness his wife? "You ask me abundance of questions," replied she, with an air of contempt: however, after a rude manner, she told me Don Ambrosio's house was but a league from Ponte Mula.

Having supped as well as my purse afforded, I bade them shew me a chamber. "You a chamber! said the hostess very scornfully; "I cannot spare a room for such as sup on a bit of bread. All my beds are taken up; I expect several gentlemen of fashion to-night: you may lie in the barn if you will: I suppose it is not the first time." She was in the right of it. I made her no answer, but went to the barn, laid myself down on some straw, and slept as soundly as a man that was heartily tired.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the reception Donna Mencía gave him at Burgos.

I Did not lie long next morning, I went to my landlady to count with her; and she was in a better humour than I left her in over-night. I imputed it to the company of three of St. Herman-dad's bailiffs who were very familiar with her: they had lain in our inn that night; and I doubt not but it was for these gentlemen that all the beds were taken up. I asked the way, when I came into the village, for Don Ambrosio's castle. By chance I met with a man of the same character as my landlord at Penafier: he did not only tell me the way to the castle, but that Don Ambrosio had been dead three weeks, and the Marchioness his wife was retired into a convent at Burgos. I directed my steps towards that city, instead of taking the road to the castle, as I at first designed: and made what haste I could to the monastery where Donna Mencía lived. I prayed the door-keeper to tell the lady that a young man newly come out of the prison at Astorga desired to see her. The door-keeper told her immediately, and when she came back conducted me into a hall, where I was not long before Don Ambrosio's widow appeared at the grate in very deep mourning. "You are welcome," said the lady: four days ago I wrote to a person to go to you, and acquaint you, that as soon as you got out of prison, I desired you to come hither. I doubted not you would not be long detained there. I said enough to the corregidor in your behalf to discharge you. The answer I received was, that you had had your liberty, but they did know what was become of you. I was afraid I should never see you more, nor ever have the satisfaction to make you a return for the obligations

obligations I have to you. Do not be cast down," said she, perceiving I was out of countenance, at appearing before her in so sorry a garb; "do not be concerned at your dress. After the service you have done me, I should be the most ungrateful of women if I did nothing for you: I will deliver you out of the miserable state you are now in; I ought to do it, and I can do it. I have wealth enough to discharge myself towards you, as obliged by gratitude, without straitening myself.

"You know," continued she, "my adventures till the time that we were both imprisoned: I will now acquaint you with what had happened afterwards, when the corregidor's people had conducted me to Burgos from Astorga. After I had told him my whole story, I went to Don Ambrosio's castle. My return occasioned a great surprise; but they informed me there that I came too late; that the Marquis was so troubled at my flight, that he was fallen sick, and the physicians despaired of his life. I had now a fresh occasion to complain of my stars; however I bade them to acquaint him with my arrival. They did so: I went to his chamber with my eyes full of tears, and my heart full of grief. "What brought you here?" said he as soon as he saw me: "are you come to glory in the sight of a work of your own making? are you not satisfied with having taken my life from me? must your eyes too be the witnesses of my death?" "My Lord," replied I, "Ines ought to have informed you, that I fled with my first husband; and had it not been for a very dreadful accident which befel us, you should never have seen me more." I then told him how Don Alvar was killed by the robbers, and how I was carried afterwards to an habitation under ground; how I was delivered thence, and what happened to me since. When I had done speaking, Don Ambrosio held out his hand to me, and said with a tender air, "It is enough;

nough; I cease to complain of you: indeed what reason have I to reproach you? you met with a husband whom you dearly loved: you left me to go with him; can I blame you for that? no, Madam, I should be in the wrong to complain: I would not suffer you to be pursued: I considered the sacred rights of your ravisher, and your inclination for him. In fine, I did you justice; and by your return hither you recover all my affections. Yes, my dear Mencia, the sight of you fills me with joy; but alas! I cannot long enjoy it; I find my last hour approaches: you are no sooner restored to me than I must bid you an eternal adieu." These words were so moving, that they made my tears flow afresh, and my soul to dissolve with immoderate sorrow. I could not help weeping aloud; and questioned whether I wept more for the death of Don Alvar whom I adored. Don Ambrosio had not a false alarm of his death: he died next day, and I became mistress of the considerable estate he settled upon me at our marriage. I shall not make an ill use of it. And though I am still young, nobody shall ever see me in the arms of a third husband. Besides that, in my opinion, it looks indecent and immodest to be thrice married. I am resolved to end my days in a convent, and become a benefactress."

Having finished her discourse thus, she pulled a purse from under her gown, which she gave me, saying, "There is a hundred ducats which I give you to equip yourself; only when you have it, come and see me again. I do not intend to confine my gratitude to so narrow a compass." I gave the lady a thousand thanks, and swore to her I would not leave Burgos without waiting on her. After this oath, which I had no inclination to break, I went and looked out for an inn; I entered the first I came to, asked for a room, and that the landlord might not have an ill opinion of me

me by the figure I made. I let him know I had wherewithal to pay my reckoning. At these words Majuelo my host surveyed me from head to foot; and being a wag, made answer, that he had no need of such assurance from me, to let him know that I should be a good guest to his house; that he saw something noble in me, through the disadvantage of my dress, and doubted not but I was a gentleman of substance. I found the rogue bantered me; and to put an end to his raillery, I shewed him my purse, told out the hundred ducats, and perceived that the sight of the gold disposed him to a more favourable judgment of me. I desired him to send a tailor to me; he said, it would be better to have a broker, who would bring all sorts of cloaths, and equip me immediately. I approved of his counsel, and resolved to follow it; but it growing towards night, I put off doing it till morning, and ordered supper to be got ready as soon as possible, resolving to make amends for my bad living ever since I came out of my subterranean dwelling.

C H A P. XV.

How Gil Blas dressed himself. Of another present the lady made him, and in what equipage he departed from Burgos.

THE waiters served me a fricassée of sheep's trotters, which I almost devoured whole. I drank in proportion to what I ate, and then went to bed, and it being a pretty good one, I was in hopes that I should have slept all night, and made but one nap of it. Instead of which, I could not sleep a wink for thinking of my new cloaths and what I should do afterwards. I could not tell what garb to wear; sometimes I was for buying a gown, and equipping myself for Salamanca; sometimes for taking orders. But at last I found the world prevailed, and I resolved to make my fortune

in it. In order to which, my purpose was to put on a sword, and set myself out like a gentleman. I was impatient for day-light, and as soon as it appeared I got up. I made such a noise in the inn, that I awaked all about me. I knocked up the waiters, who cursed me for my pains; but they could not help rising, and I would not let them be at rest till they had brought me a broker, which was done in a minute; he came, attended with two boys, who brought each a green bundle. Their master saluted me very civilly, saying, "Signior, it was your very good luck to light of me: however, I would not run down my brethren: I would, by no means, injure their reputation, but, between you and me, there is not one of them who has a conscience: they are all as hard as Jews: I am the only broker who has a grain of honesty. I am contented with a reasonable profit: a penny in the pound is all I desire; thank my stars I love fair dealing."

After this preamble, which I took all for gospel, like a fool as I was, he bade his boys to open their bundles. He shewed me suits of all sorts of colours, and some that were plain; but I rejected the latter with disdain, they were too modest for me. He at last made me try on one, which fitted me exactly every way; the coat was of blue velvet embroidered with gold, and the cloak of the same. I liked it mightily, though it had been worn, and asked the price of it. The broker perceiving I had taken a fancy to it, said, I had a very good choice. "By my faith," cried he, "you understand these things. This suit was made for one of the greatest lords of the kingdom; he never had it on but thrice. Examine the velvet, nothing can be finer: and as for the embroidery, never was any thing better wrought." "How much will it cost?" replied I. "Sixty ducats," said he: "I have refused it, as I am an honest man." I offered him

him five and forty, which was as much again as the suit was worth. "Signior," replied the broker, "I will make but one word with you. See some of these suits," continued he, pointing to those I had rejected, "I will sell them to you much cheaper." This made me the more eager for that I had pitched upon, and imagining that he would not bate any thing, I told him out sixty ducats. When he saw I was so easy, as honest a man as he was, I perceived he was sorry he had not demanded more for it. However, contenting himself with his penny in the pound, he took my money, and departed with his two boys, whom I shall never forget.

I had now got a handsome suit and cloak; the next thing was to buy linen, hat, shoes, stockings, and a sword; which done, I put them all on, and was wonderfully delighted to see myself so equipped: I was never satisfied with surveying myself; never was peacock prouder of his feathers. I went the same day, and paid a second visit to Donna Mencía, who received me as graciously as she had done at the first: she thanked me again for the service I had done her, and abundance of compliments passed on both sides. She then wished me all happiness, and bade me farewell, giving me only a ring worth about thirty pistoles, when she left me, praying me to keep it for her sake. I was very much baulked at this present, expecting something better than a ring; and not at all contented with the lady's generosity, I returned to my inn very thoughtful. But, as I entered it, a man followed me, and throwing open his cloak, shewed a huge bag which had the appearance of a money-bag: and, at the sight of it, I stared greedily upon it, as did all present. As for me, I thought I heard the voice of a seraphim, who, laying the bag upon a table, said to me, "Signior Gil Blas, this is what madam the Marchioness has sent you."

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I bowed very reverently to the bearer, I confounded him with my civilities; and as soon as he was got out of the inn, threw myself on the money-bag, like a hawk on his prey. I carried it to my chamber, opened it, and found therein a thousand ducats: I had just done counting them, when my host, who heard what the bearer had said to me, entered my chamber to see what was in the bag. He was surprised at the sight of so many ducats lying on the table. "What a duce," says he, "is all this money yours? you must know how to please the women sure? you have not been twenty-four hours in Burgos, and have already marchionesses under contributions."

This discourse did not displease me: I was tempted to leave Majuelo in his mistake. It flattered my vanity. I do not wonder young men love to be thought in the good graces of the ladies. But I was more innocent than vain. I undeceived my landlord: I told him the story of Donna Mencía; to which he listened very attentively. I consulted him what was best for me to do in my present circumstances, the man seeming to be in my interest. He stood silent some time, and then answered seriously: "Signior Gil Blas I have a love for you; and since you put so much trust in me, as to open yourself so frankly, I will tell you plainly what I think you had best do. You seem to be made for a court: I advise you to endeavour to get into the service of some great lord, and either to gain his confidence, by serving him in his interests or in his pleasures. If you do not do that, you lose your time. I know some persons of quality that do not care a farthing for the zeal of an honest man; they mind nobody that is not necessary to them. You have another way left still: You are young, handsome; and if you had no wit, that would be enough to gain you some rich widow, or some pretty woman unhappily married. If love
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ruins men who have estates, it often makes those that want them. I think you will therefore do well to go to Madrid; but I would not advise you to go alone. People judge by appearances, and you will be looked upon according to the figure you make. I will help you to a valet, an honest fellow, and as handy a one as any in Spain. Buy two mules, one for yourself, and another for him, and depart as soon as you can."

The counsel was too agreeable to my humour for me to neglect it. I bought two mules the next day, and hired the valet he spoke of: he was about thirty years old, and appeared to be a plain downright fellow. He said he was a native of Galicia, and his name *Ambrose de Lamelo*. Whereas other servants haggle about their wages, he was contented with any thing, and I thought he would take it as a favour if I would let him serve me for nothing. I bought also some boots, and a portmantau, paid my reckoning, and on the morrow departed before sun rising from Burgos to Madrid.

C H A P. XVI.

Shewing that one ought not to make too sure of prosperity.

WE lay the first night at Duenas, and arrived the second at Valladolid, about four o'clock in the afternoon. We alighted at an inn which looked to be one of the best of the town. I left the care of the mules to my valet, and went to a room, which was shewn me by one of the servants of the house, who carried my portmantau. Finding myself tired, I threw myself down on the bed, without pulling my boots off; I fell asleep and did not awake till almost night, when I called for Ambrose, but he was not in the inn. He came soon after: I asked him where he had been, and he answered, with a holy grimace, at church, to
return

return thanks to Heaven, for having preserved us from all ill accidents in our journey from Burgos to Valladolid. I approved of what he had been doing, and then bade him get me a pullet for my supper. While I was giving him this order, my landlord entered the chamber with a taper in his hand, lighting a lady, who appeared to be more fair than young, and very richly dressed, a negro holding up her tail. I was not a little surprised, when, after having made me a low courtesy, she asked me, as if by chance, "whither I was not Signior Gil Blas of Santillane?" I no sooner replied "Yes," than she let go the hand of her gentleman usher, to embrace me with a transport of joy, which added the more to my surprise. "Heaven," cried she, "what a happy adventure is this! it is you that I am seeking." I then called to mind the parasite of Penaster, and was about to conclude that this lady was much such another sort of creature: But what she said afterwards gave me a more favourable opinion of her. "I am," continued she, "cousin-german to Donna Mencia de Mosquera, who is so much obliged to you. I this morning received a letter from her, informing me, that understanding you were going to Madrid, she desired me to entertain you, if you passed this way. I have been running up and down the city these two hours in quest of you. I went from inn to inn to inquire of all the strangers I saw, and, by this host's description of you, I imagined at last that you might be the deliverer of my cousin. And now that I have met you, I will let you see how sensible I am of the service you did my family, and my dear kinswoman in particular. Pray go with me to my house; you will be more commodiously lodged there than here." I would have excused myself, and represented to the lady that I should be too troublesome to her; but she would not be put off. There waited a coach at the gate
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of the inn ; she took care herself to see my port-manteau put into it, "because," said she, "there are rogues at Valladolid ;" which I found too true. In short, I went into the coach with her, and her gentleman-usher, and was in this manner carried away from the inn, to the great dislike of my landlord, who lost the taking of so much money as he supposed I should have spent there. After our coach had passed through several streets, it stopped. We alighted at a pretty large house, and came to an apartment well furnished, and illuminated with twenty or thirty sconces. There were several servants waiting, of whom the lady demanded whether Don Raphael was arrived ? They answered, No. Then she addressed herself thus to me : "Signior Gil Blas, I expect my brother to night from a country seat which we have two leagues off. How agreeably will he be surpris'd, to find a man in his house, to whom all our family is so much oblig'd !" In the moment she was talking we heard a noise, and understood it was occasioned by the arrival of Don Raphael. That gentleman presently made his appearance. He was a young, handsome, brisk man. "I am overjoy'd to see you, brother," says the lady to him ; "you will help me to entertain Signior Gil Blas of Santillane ; we can never do enough in return for his services to our cousin Donna Mencia." "Here," added she, offering him a letter, "read what she has written me." Don Raphael opened the billet, and read these words out aloud.

DEAR CAMILIA,

SIGNIOR Gil Blas of Santillane, who saved my honour and life, is now going to court ; he will doubtless pass by Valladolid. I conjure you, by our relation, and, what is more, by our friendship, to entertain him, and keep him some time at your house. I flatter myself that you will give
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me this satisfaction; and that my deliverer will receive of you and my cousin Don Raphael all manner of kind treatment. At Burgos.

Your affectionate Cousin,

DONNA MENCIA.

"How!" said Don Raphael, when he had read the letter, "is this the gentleman to whom my cousin owes both honour and life? Heaven be praised for so happy a meeting." Saying this, he caught me in his arms: "How do I rejoice," continued he, "in seeing here Signior Gil Blas of Santillane! My cousin the Marchioness had no need of desiring us to entertain you: had she only hinted to us that you were to pass through Valladolid, my sister Camilla and I know our duty too well, not to make much of a person who has so highly obliged a lady so dear to our whole family." I made the best answer I could to these discourses, which were followed by others of the same nature, intermixed with a thousand caresses. After which, observing that I had still my boots on, they ordered their servants to take them off.

We then went into another room, where there was a table spread: we sat down, and all their talk at supper was as obliging as that before: I could not say a word but they were taken with it, and were both of them very officious to help me out of every dish. Don Raphael often drank Donna Mencia's health. I followed his example; and observed sometimes that Camilla, who would have her glass too, cast a look upon me, which had a signification in it. I took notice that she would watch her opportunity to do it, as if she was afraid her brother would perceive it. I needed no more to be persuaded that I was in her favour, and imagined I might make my advantage of it, if I staid ever so little while at Valladolid. The hopes of this made me easily comply with their request

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to pass a few days with them. They thanked me for my complaisance; and Camilla was so glad, that I doubted not of her having found out something amiable in me.

Don Raphael finding that I had determined to stay there some time, proposed to carry me to his castle. He made a magnificent description of it to me, and enlarged upon the diversions we should meet with there. "Sometimes," says he, "we will hunt, sometimes fish, sometimes take the air; we have fine woods and delicious gardens; besides, we shall have rare company; I hope you will not be tired there." I accepted of his proposal; and the next day was appointed for our going to that fine castle of his. Having formed so agreeable a design, we rose from the table. Don Raphael seemed to be transported; "Signior Gil Blas," said he, embracing me, "I leave you with my sister; I am going this minute to give the necessary orders, and invite the persons that shall be of our company." At these words he went out. I continued the conversation with the lady, whose discourse was of a piece with her looks, she took me by the hand, and cast her eyes upon my ring: "That is a fine diamond," says she: "do you understand stones?" I replied, "No." "I am sorry," said the lady, "for you might then have told me what this is worth." She then shewed me a large ruby she had on her finger; and while I was looking on it, added, "An uncle of mine, governour of the Phillippine islands belonging to the Spaniards, gave it to me. The jewellers of Valladolid value it at about three hundred pistoles." "I believe they hit it," said I, "it is extremely fine." "Since you like it," replied she, "I will truck with you." She then took my ring, and put her own on my little finger. I thought this way of making a present very gallant. She after this squeezed me by the hand, and giving me a tender glance, broke off
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the conversation of a sudden, bade me good night, and retired in confusion, as if she had been ashamed to have discovered her sentiments to me in that manner.

Though I was a novice in gallantry, I imagined that her going away so hastily boded well for me; and that I should not spend my time ill in the country. Full of these pleasing fancies, and the happy state of my affairs, I shut myself up in the chamber where I was to lie, having bid my valet call me early in the morning. Instead of sleeping, I sweetly meditated on the portmanteau that lay on the table, and the ruby that I had on my finger. "Thank Heaven," said I to myself, "I was once unfortunate; I am not so now: here is a ring worth three hundred pistoles; there's a thousand ducats in gold; these will last me a long while. Majuelo, I find, did not flatter me: the ladies of Madrid will receive me very kindly, since Camilla is already so gracious to me." I was charmed by the bounty of that generous lady, and my head full of the diversions I was to have with Don Raphael at his castle. However, as delightful as these ideas were to me, sleep at last overtook me; and when I awoke next morning, I found that the day was pretty well spent. I was surprised that my servant had not called me, according to my order. "My faithful Ambrose," said I to myself, "is either at church, or he is very lazy to-day." But I had not so good an opinion of him long; for getting up, and missing my portmanteau, I suspected he had robbed me of it in the night. To satisfy myself in the matter, I opened my chamber-door, and called the hypocrite several times. Upon which an old man came to me, and "asked what I wanted?" adding, "All your people went away this morning before day; there is not one of them in my house." "How! your house!" cried I; "is not this Don Raphael's?" "I know no such

such man," said he; "you are in a lodging house: the lady who supped with you last night came to us yesterday in the evening, and hired this apartment for a great lord who travelled *incognito*, and paid me beforehand.

This was enough for me. I presently perceived what sort of people Camilla and Don Raphael were; and that my valet, having fully informed himself of my affairs, had sold me to those cheats. Instead of blaming myself for this sad accident, and thinking that it would not have happened to me, if I had not had the indiscretion of opening myself to Majuelo without any manner of necessity, I laid all the fault on innocent fortune, and a hundred times cursed my stars. The landlord of the lodgings, to whom I told the adventure, appeared to be very sensible of the concern I was in. He pitied me, and said he was sorry such a thing should happen in his house: but, notwithstanding all his pretences, I doubt not but he had as great share of the villany and booty as my landlord at Burgos, to whom I imputed the honour of the contrivance.

C H A P. XVII.

What Gil Blas did after the adventure of the lodging-house.

WHEN I had enough deplored my misfortune, I considered that I ought rather to bear up against it, than suffer myself to be depressed by it. I took heart, and said to myself, as I was putting on my cloaths, "It is well the rogues have not taken them too. I have some ducats still in my pockets." They had been so merciful to me as that came to, and had also left my boots, which I gave to my landlord for a third part of what they cost me. I then left his house, without bidding adieu to any one in it, having occasion for nobody
to

to carry my luggage for me. The first thing I did, was, to see whether my mules were at the inn, where I left them the day before. I guessed that Ambrose had taken them with him, and I wish I had always made so right a judgment of him. I learned that he carried them off the evening before. So, never thinking to see them or my portmanteau again, I walked up and down the streets, pondering in my mind what I should do next.

I was tempted to return to Burgos, to have a second recourse to Donna Mencía; but I thought again that would be to impose upon that lady's bounty, and she would look upon me as a sot: so I gave over that design. I swore also that I would for the future be upon my guard against women, and would not trust even the chaste Susannah. I every now and then cast my eyes upon my ring, and reflecting that it was a present of Camilla's, I sighed, and said to myself, "It is certainly no ruby, and I need not go to a jeweller to be informed that I am a bubble." Nevertheless I was willing to know whether it was so or not, and shewed my ring to an artist, who said it was worth three ducats. At this estimation, which I expected, I gave the governour of the Philippine islands niece to the devil. As I was going out of the jeweller's shop, I met with a young man who stopped to take a view of me. I did not call him to mind presently, though I knew him very well. "How! Gil Blas!" says he; "do you make as if you did not know me? Can you in two years time forget the barber Nunnez's son? Am I so much altered? do you not remember your old playfellow Fabricio, your countryman, and school-fellow, after we have so often disputed together, at Doctor Godinez's, of universals, and metaphysical degrees?" I called him to mind before he had done speaking, and embraced him with a great deal of joy. "I am glad to see you, my dear friend," cried I: "I can-

not

not express my transport." "But," said he, with a look of surprise, "how comes it that you are as fine as a prince? a sword, silk stockings, an embroidered coat, and velvet cloak? On my word you must have had very good luck, some old woman or other has been so bountiful to you." "Thou art mistaken," replied I; "things do not go with me so swimmingly as you imagine." "That sham will not take," says he; "you affect to be discreet. Where had you that fine ring upon your finger? tell me that, Monsieur Gil Blas." "From an arrant cheat, dear Fabricio, a jade, that, instead of enriching me with her favours, has ruined me by her deceit."

I spoke this so sorrowfully, that Fabricio perceived I had been bubbled; and pressed me to tell him the matter; which I was ready enough to do. But the story being long, and I being not willing to part with him soon, we went into a tavern, to be the more at ease. I there told him all that had happened to me ever since I left Oviedo. My adventures seemed very odd to him; and after he had sympathized with me in my present sad estate, he said, "Come, child, one should never be cast down in misfortune: when a man of sense is in trouble, he waits with patience for better times. A man, as Cicero says, should never be so depressed in his mind, as to forget he is a man. For my part, that is my temper. My misfortunes have not sunk me; I am still above ill fate: for instance, I loved a girl of a good family in Oviedo, and I was beloved by her; I asked her parents consent: they refused me. Another man would have hanged or drowned himself. What do you think I did? I stole her, and carried her off with me. She was brisk, blunt, and a coquet. Her humour wore off my passion: I travelled up and down in the kingdom of Galicia six months with her. Thence I would have gone a voyage to sea; but she would needs

needs go to Portugal, and take with her another companion. This would also have made some men desperate. I bore up under it, and wiser than Menelaus, instead of taking arms against Paris who had robbed me of my Helen, I was glad he took a plague from me, which I was willing enough to get rid of. After this, not caring to return to the Asturias; and having a controversy with the judges, I proceeded to the kingdom of Leon, spending in every town I came to, the money I had left, part of what I brought off with my damsel; for we took as much both of us as we could get at our coming from Oviedo. When I arrived at Palencia I had but one ducat, which I was obliged to change for a pair of shoes, and a few reals, that were not like to last me long. I therefore resolved to go to service, and hired myself to a linen-draper, who had a rake to his son. I fared well enough here; but had a difficult task how to carry myself. The father ordered me to watch his son; the son desired me to help to cheat his father. Which should I do? why, truly I preferred the one's desire to the other's order, and was turned out of doors for so doing. I then got into the service of an old painter, who out of kindness would teach me his art; but then he starved me into the bargain, which gave me a disgust of painting and Palencia; whence I came to Valladolid, where, by the greatest luck in the world, I was hired by the steward of an hospital. I live with him still, and have a rare place of it. Signior Manuel Ordonez, my master, is a man of profound piety: it is said that from his youth he has minded nothing else but relieving the poor: the pains he has taken has met with their reward: every thing prospers with him: and by looking after the poor, he is himself grown rich."

Fabricio having finished his discourse, I said to him, "I am glad you like your condition so well;

out, between you and me, methinks you may do better in the world." "Thou art mistaken, Gil Blas," replied he, a man of my humour can never do better than I do. To be a lackey, is not grateful to some men: but a lad of wit will find it full of charms. A man of a superior genius never does his business in service so well as one of us merry fellows. We rather command, than obey: we begin with studying our master well; we get his blind side, and then lead him where we list. Thus have I behaved myself with my steward; I found him out immediately, that he would fain pass for a saint, and I pretend to take him for such a one, carrying myself towards him accordingly. I copied after him, acted the same part, deceived the deceiver, and am his fac-totum. I hope one time or other to acquire, under his auspices, the care of the poor also, and then I doubt not but to make my fortune as well as he has done, for I find I have the same itch after riches."

"Fine hopes these, dear Fabricio," replied I; "and I felicitate you upon them. As for me, I will resume my first design; I will turn my embroidered coat into a gown, go to Salamanca, list myself under the banner of the university, and take on me the office of a preceptor." "A hopeful project!" cries Fabricio; "a pleasant fancy! Wouldst thou be so mad as to turn pedant at this age? Dost thou know what thou art about to undertake? As soon as thou art placed there, all the college will observe thee, they will have a watchful eye on thy least actions: thou must incessantly put a constraint on thyself: thy exterior must be all hypocritical; and thou must, in appearance, be possessed of all the virtues. Eternally must thou be chiding my scholar, and spend thy time in teaching him Latin, and reproving him when he says or does any thing against decency. After all this toil and trouble, what will be the fruit of thy care?

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If the young gentleman takes ill courses, they will say thou spoilest him ; and thou shalt have nothing for thy pains, not perhaps so much as the poor salary they were to give thee. Prithee talk no more of the office of a preceptor ; a lackey's place is worth ten of it : it is a fine cure : if a master has vices, a good genius will know how to humour them, and make his advantage of them. A valet lives at his ease ; he eats and drinks his fill, sleeps soundly and has no care to disturb him "

" I should never have done, child," pursued he, " if I should go about to tell thee all the advantages of a valet. Trust me, Gil Blas, do as I do." " Ah Fabricio," replied I, " one cannot meet with a steward of an hospital every day ; and when I accept of a valet's place, I am resolved it shall be a good one." " You say right," said he, " and leave that to me : I will answer for it ; and if I hinder a gallant man's throwing himself away at the university, I shall have done a meritorious act."

The poverty with which I was threatened, and Fabricio's contented look prevailing upon me more than his reasons, I determined to enter into some service. We then left the tavern ; and my countryman said, " I will this minute carry thee to a man to whom most of the valets that want places apply themselves. There are intelligence offices where one can at any time hear of a place : this man keeps one : he has informers that acquaint him with whatever is done in a family : he knows who wants valets, and keeps an exact register not only of vacant places, but also of the good and the bad qualities of the master : he has a brother in some convent ; and in a word, it was he who helped me to my place."

We were entertaining ourselves with this intelligence office, when the barber Nunnez's son brought me to a little house, where we found a man of a

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about fifty writing at a table. We saluted him with a great deal of respect; but whether or not he was surly in his nature, or being used to see no body but valets, had accustomed himself to that rude manner, he did not rise off from his seat; he nodded his head, and that was all: however, he looked upon me very attentively. I saw he was surprised that a young man in an embroidered velvet coat should turn lackey: he had more reason to think I came to look out for one; but he was not long in suspense: Fabricio saying to him, "Signior Arias de Londonna, I have brought one of my best friends to you; he is a lad who was well born, but misfortunes have reduced him to the necessity of serving; help him to a good place; and depend upon it he will be very grateful to you." "So you all cry, Gentlemen. Before you have a place you make the fairest promises in the world; but when you have got it, you think no more of them." "I hope," replied Fabricio, "you have no reason to complain of me: have not I done handsomely by you?" "You might have done better," said Arias; "your place is as good as a clerk's in the treasury, and you paid me as if I had put you with an author." I thought it was now time for me to speak, and gave Signior Arias to understand, that, to show I was not ungrateful, I would give him a gratuity beforehand. Accordingly I put my hand in my pocket, and took out two ducats, with a promise not to stop there if I was well placed.

He seemed very well pleased with my proceedings, and cried, "Ay, this is something like! I love every one should deal so with me. There are some excellent places vacant," continued he; "I will name them to you, and do you chuse for yourself." Saying this, he put on his spectacles, opened a register which lay on his table, turned over some leaves, and read as follows: "Captain Torbellino,

bellino, a passionate, whimsical man, wants a valet: he is always swearing, and beats his servants so, that he cripples them." "That will not do," cried I, "go on to another; I don't like this captain." Arias smiled at my quickness, and read on again: "Donna Manuela de Sandoval, a superannuated lady, a woman of peevish, odd temper, has no valet: she generally keeps but one, and hardly that for a day together. There is a livery coat in the house which serves for all the valets that come thither, let them be of what size they will. It may be said that they have only tried it on: for it is as good as new, though two thousand valets have had it on. Dr. Alvar Fannez wants a valet: he is a chymist; he keeps his servants well, and allows them good wages; but then he tries his medicines upon them. There are often vacancies in this man's house." "You have shewn us a fine parcel of places," says Fabricio, interrupting him. "Have a little patience," says Arias de Londonna, "we have not done yet; we shall come to some by and by that will content you." He then read in his register: "Donna Alfonsa de Solis, an old bigot, who spends two thirds of her time at church, and will always have her valet with her; she has been without one these three weeks. The licentiate Sedillo, an old canon of the chapter of this city, turned away his valet yesterday." "Stop there, Signior Arias de Londonna," cried Fabricio, "we will go no farther; this place will do. Sedillo is a friend of my master's, and I know him perfectly well: he has an old housekeeper, called *Dame Jacinta*, who manages every thing; and they live as well as any people in Valladolid. There is plenty of all things: besides, the canon is an infirm man, an old, gouty creature; he cannot live long, and his valet is sure of a legacy when he dies. A charming prospect for a lackey, Gil Blas," added he, turning to me: let us lose no time,

time, friend; we will go to the licentiate's this minute: I will present thee to him myself, and be responsible for thee." For fear of losing so fair an opportunity, we took our leaves abruptly of Signior Arias, who assured me for my money, that if I missed this place, he would help me to as good a one.

B O O K II.

C H A P. I.

Fabricio carries Gil Blas to the licentiate Sedillo's house. In what state they found the canon. The portrait of his housekeeper.

WE were so afraid of coming too late to the old licentiate's, that we ran all the way.

The door was shut when we came to this house: we knocked; a girl of ten years of age, whom the housekeeper made pass for her niece, in spite of scandal, opened the door; and we demanded to speak with the canon. Dame Jacinta appeared; she was certainly arrived at the years of discretion; but she was still handsome, and had particularly a very fresh complexion. She had an ordinary stuff morning gown on, with a leather girdle, to which hung on one side a bunch of keys, and on the other a string of large beads. We saluted her very respectfully; she did the same by us, looking very modest and courteous.

"I understand," says my comrade, "that the licentiate Signior Sedillo wants an honest lad to serve him; and I have brought him one that, I doubt not, will content him." At these words the housekeeper fixed her eyes upon me; and thinking my embroidery did not very well suit with Fabricio's discourse, demanded if it was I who wanted

the vacant place? "Yes, this young man" said the son of Nunnez: "as fine as he appears, some misfortunes oblige him to look out for a service: he will soon forget them," added he, with a genteel air, "if he is so happy as to get into this house, and live with the virtuous Jacinta, who deserves to be housekeeper to the patriarch of the Indies." At these words the old jade gave over looking on me, to take a survey of the civil person that spoke to her; and thinking that she had some knowledge of him, "I have a confused notion of seeing you before," said she; "pray, where was it?" Chaste Jacinta," replied Fabricio, "I am very proud that you are pleased to take notice of me: I have been here twice with my master Signior Manuel Ordonnez, steward of the hospital." "It is so," says the housekeeper; "I remember it, and call you to mind. And since you belong to Signior Ordonnez, you must doubtless be a sober, honest young man; your place speaks in praise of you; and this lad cannot have a better man to be responsible for him: come in," continued she, "I will introduce you to Signior Sedillo; I believe he will be glad to have a youth of your recommendation." We followed Dame Jacinta to the canon's apartment, which was below stairs, and consisted of four little rooms. Jacinta desired us to stay in the outermost while she went into the next, where was the licentiate. When they had talked the matter over between themselves, she came out, and said, we might go in. We found the old doctor in a large easy chair, with a pillow under his head, and cushions under his arms and legs, the latter on a stool. We approached him without standing much upon ceremony. Fabricio was still the spokesman; and not content with repeating what he had said to the housekeeper, he highly extolled my merit: and enlarged particularly on the honour I had acquired at Dr. Godinez's in my philosophical

lofophical difputations, as if one had need to be a great philofopher, to qualify one to be a canon's valet. However, his panegyric had fo good an effect on the licentiate, who befides had obferved that Dame Jacinta was not againft taking me, that he answered the fon of Nunnez, " Friend, I take the lad thou haft brought into my fervice. I like him well and have a good opinion of his manners, being recommended to me by a fervant of Signior Ordonnez."

Fabricio perceiving that I was hired, made a low bow to the canon, and a lower ftill to the houfe-keeper. After which he retired, well fatisfied with what he had done, whifpering me in the ear, " We fhall fee one another again; keep where you are." As foon as he was gone, the licentiate asked me what my name was? why I left my country? and by fuch questions engaged me to tell my whole ftory before Dame Jacinta. I diverted them both, efpecially by the relation of my laft adventure. The old man almoft killed himfelf with laughing at the civility of Camillo and Don Raphael. It threw him into fuch a fit of coughing, that I thought he never would have come to himfelf again. He had not made his will yet; and one may by that imagine what a fright his houfe-keeper was in: ſhe ran trembling to his affiftance, and did every thing that is done to infants when they cough, rubbed his forehead, and clapt him on the back, which recovered him. The old man gave over coughing, and his houfekeeper ceafed to torment him. I was going to finish my ftory; but Dame Jacinta, fearing a fecond cough, was againft it. She then took me with her to the canon's wardrobe, where hang up a livery-fuit, which had ſerved my predeceffor. She gave it to me, and put mine in its place; which I was willing to keep, hoping ftill that I might have occaſion to make uſe of it. After this we went both of us to get dinner ready.

She found that I was no stranger to what belonged to a kitchen; I had served an apprenticeship to it under Dame Leonarda, who was a tolerable cook, but not comparable to Dame Jacinta, who perhaps outdid the archbishop of Toledo's. She excelled in every thing: her jellies were exquisite; her sauces the same; her fricassees and hashes the best seasoned in the world. When dinner was ready, we returned to the canon's room; where, while I laid the cloth near his easy chair, the house-keeper tucked a napkin under his chin, and tied it about his shoulders.

This done, I brought him some soup, which might have been served up to the famous director of Madrid; and two ragouts that might have satisfied the sensuality of a viceroy, had not Dame Jacinta been sparing of her spices, for fear of enraging the licentiate's gout. At the sight of these two dishes, my old master, who seemed before debilitated in all his members, shewed me that he had not entirely lost the use of his arms. He helped himself to put away his pillow and cushions, and prepared to fall to very briskly. Though his hand shook, he did not refuse its service: it came and went freely, but so that he spilt half of what he would have carried to his mouth, on the tablecloth and his napkin. When he had done with the soup and ragouts, I served him up a partridge and two quails roasted. Dame Jacinta was very officious to supply him with wine, a little tempered, in a large, deep silver cup, which she held to his mouth as if he had been a child of fifteen months old.

He devoured the ragouts, and made the same dispatch with the trotters. When he had stuffed himself up to the chin, his handmaid took off his napkin, put his pillows and his cushions in their places again; and left him in his easy chair to take that repose which generally attends a full stomach:

we cleared his table, and went ourselves to dinner at another.

Thus did the canon regale himself every day, being perhaps the greatest eater of the whole chapter. Indeed somewhat less satisfied him for a supper than for dinner. A pullet and a dessert would do at night. I fared very well in this house, I lived at my ease. There was but one thing that I could complain of, which was my being obliged to watch a-nights with my master, as if I had had a sick body to tend. Besides a retention of urine, which made him call for his chamberpot ten times an hour, he was very apt to sweat; and when he did so, I must change his shirt for him. "Gil Blas," said he to me the second night, "thou art a dexterous, active youth: I foresee I shall like thee well; I only recommend to thee to cary it towards Dame Jacinta with complaisance. She has served me very zealously these fifteen years. She has always taken particular care of my person. I cannot be too grateful to her. I must own to thee freely, I love her better than all my family. I turned a relation of mine, my own sister's son, out of doors on her account. He paid no manner of respect to her: and instead of doing justice to her sincere attachment for me, the rascal treated her as an hypocrite. Virtue now a-days is nothing but hypocrisy with such young fellows: thank heaven I got rid of him. He who has a kindness for me is my best relation, and I will own kindness to no body but those that do me good offices." "You are in the right, Sir," said I to the licentiate; "gratitude ought to have more force upon us than the laws of nature." "Most certainly," replied he; "and my will makes it appear how little I value my relations. My governante comes in for a good share; and I shall not forget thee, if thou goest on as thou dost begin. The valet I dismissed yesterday lost a good legacy by it. If the wretch had not

forced me by his ill carriage to turn him off, I should have enriched him; but he was a proud rogue, and did not pay due respect to Dame Jacinta: and so lazy, he cared not to be at the least trouble. He did not love to wake with me; and it was a most tiresome thing in him to pass the nights in attendance upon me." "A rascal," cried I, as if inspired by the genius of Fabricio, "he deserved not to wait upon so honest a gentleman as you are. A lad that has the good fortune to belong to you, ought to be indefatigable in his endeavours to please you. He should delight in his duty; and though he sweat blood and water for you, not think he did too much."

I perceived these words were very acceptable to the canon; nor was he less delighted to hear me assure him how respectfully I would behave myself towards Dame Jacinta. Resolving therefore to pass for a valet, I strove to be easy, and then I went through my service with the best grace in the world. I made no complaint of being kept up a-nights; but I must confess I did not very well like it; and had not the legacy ran in my mind, I should soon have been weary of my place. It is true, I slept some hours in the day-time. I must do the governante the justice to own she was very civil to me, which I attributed to the pains I took to get into her good graces by my obliging and respectful carriage. If I was at table with her and her niece Inesille, I changed their plates for them, filled out their wine, and was very officious to serve them in all things. By these methods I made them my friends. One day when Dame Jacinta was gone to market, I began to discourse Inesille about her parentage; I asked her if her father and mother were living? "No," replied she, "they have been dead a long time; so my good aunt tells me, for I never saw them." I took what the girl said for truth, though
her

her discourse did not seem to be so plain as it should be, and drew the girl in to talk so freely at last, that she told me more than I would have had her : she informed me, or rather I apprehended by what she said, (several words escaping her which she did not intend), that this good aunt of hers had a good friend who lived also with an old canon, whose temporalities he had the care of ; and that these two happy domestics were in hopes to join together the spoils of their masters by a marriage, the pleasures of which they enjoyed beforehand. I have observed already, that Dame Jacinta, though a little superannuated, had still a pretty good complexion : it is true, she spared for no pains to preserve it : she took a clyster every morning ; and all the day long, and at night too, till she fell asleep, she swallowed excellent pills, prepared for that purpose : she also had her full sleep, while I was waking with my master ; but what contributed perhaps more than any thing to preserve her complexion so fresh, were two issues, which Laefille said she had, one in each leg.

CH A P. II.

How the canon was treated when he fell sick : what happened upon it. The legacy he left Gil Blas by his last will.

I Served the licentiate Sedillo three months without complaining of the bad nights he made me pass with him. At the end of that time he fell sick. He was taken with a fever ; and the pain it gave him inflamed his gout. Then it was that he sent for a doctor, the first time he had made use of one all his life, though it had been pretty long. He ordered Dr. Sangrado to be called, a physician whom all Valladolid took to be another Hippocrates. Dame Jacinta wished that the canon would have, in the first place, settled his last will and

codicil. She hinted it to him; but he did not think himself so near his end, and was besides very obstinate in certain matters. I went for Dr. Sangrado, and brought him to our house. He was a meagre, pale man, and had been a practitioner forty years. He affected a grave look. He weighed his words, and would be thought to talk eloquently. His arguments seemed to be geometrical, and his opinions extremely singular.

Having looked upon my master, he said, with a doctoral air, "We must supply the want of perspiration which is stopt; others in my place would, without doubt, make use of salts and volatile medicaments, which are, for the most part, made up of sulphur and mercury; but purgatives and sudorifics are pernicious drugs. All chymical preparations are prejudicial. I use nothing but what is simple and safe. What diet have you used yourself to?" continued he to the canon. "I eat generally soups and jellies, replied he. "Soups and jellies!" cried the doctor: "I do not wonder you are ill; all such delicious meats are poisoned pleasures; snares laid for men by voluptuousness, to destroy them more surely. You must renounce such high food. The plainest is the most healthy. As the blood is insipid, so it requires meats that come nearest to nature. Do you drink wine?" added he. "Yes," said the licentiate, "wine mingled with water." "As much water as you think proper," replied the physician. "How irregular you are! what a frightful regimen is this! I wonder you have lived so long as you have. How old are you?" "Sixty-nine," says the canon. "Just as I thought," replied the doctor: "old age is anticipated by intemperance. If you had lived on a plain diet, as roasted apples, and drank water only, you would not now have had the gout. All your members would easily have performed their functions. However I do not despair setting you

you upon your feet again, provided you do as I shall direct. The licentiate promised to obey him in all things. Then Sangrado sent me for a surgeon of his acquaintance, and took away six good dishes of blood from my master, to begin to supply the want of perspiration. "Mr. Onez," says he to the surgeon, "come three hours hence, and take away as much more: do the same to-morrow. It is an error to think blood is necessary for the preservation of life. One cannot bleed a sick man too much. He is not obliged to any motion or considerable exercise. He has nothing to do but save himself from dying; and wants no more blood to support life than a man that is asleep does: life in both consists only in the pulse and perspiration." Thus did the doctor order frequent and plentiful bleedings; and that the canon should have hot water given him every moment, assuring him that water drank in abundance was a certain specific against all sorts of diseases. When he went out, he looked on Dame Jacinta and me with an air of content, and said, he would answer for the sick man's doing well, if he be managed in the manner he prescribed. The governante, who perhaps had another opinion of his method, protested that his prescriptions should be exactly followed. Accordingly we immediately set water a heating: and the doctor having recommended to us, above all things, not to be sparing of it to him, we made my master take two or three pints at a draught. An hour after we repeated the dose; and so every hour, till we had poured into his stomach a deluge of water. The surgeon seconded us by the quantity of blood he drew from him; and all of us in two days time reduced the old canon to extremity. The good man not being able to swallow any more of the specific, said to me with a faint voice, "Hold, Gil Blas; do not give me any more, friend. I see I shall die, notwithstanding the vir-

tue of the water ; and though they have hardly left me a drop of blood, I am not a bit the better for it, which is a proof that the most skilful physician cannot prolong a man's life, when his hour is come. Go fetch me a notary : I will add a codicil to my will." Though I was far from being afflicted to hear him talk of his will, yet I affected to seem very sorry ; and concealing the pleasure I took in executing the commission he gave me, " Ah Sir," cried I, " it is not so bad with you yet : with heaven's help you may recover." " No, no, child," replied he, " I find the gout returns upon me, approaches nearer to my vitals, and my time is come ; be quick, haste, and do as I bid you." Indeed I could perceive that he altered, and was drawing near his end ; so I made haste to obey his commands with respect to the notary, leaving with him Dame Jacinta, who was more afraid than I that he should die without adding his codicil to his testament. I went to the first notary I could get ; and finding him at home, " Sir," said I, my master the licentiate Sedillo is a dying. He wants a codicil to be added to his will, pray dispatch ; we must not lose a moment." The notary was a little old man who loved raillery. He asked me who was the canon's physician ? " I answered, " Dr. Sangrado." At the name of him he took his cloak and hat, and cried, " Let us be gone, for that doctor is very expeditious ; he hardly gives his patients time to send for notaries. That man has hindered me of many a good testament." Saying this, he made what haste he could ; and we went together to my master, not letting the grass grow under us, to prevent his going out of the world before he had settled his affairs. As we were on the way, I said to the notary, " You know, Sir, that a dying man often loses his memory : if by chance my master should forget me, I beg you to put him in mind of my industry." " That I will

will, child," replied the little notary; "depend upon it I will exhort him to give thee something considerable, if he is ever so little disposed to reward thee for thy services. When we came to my master, he had his senses still about him. Dame Jacinta was with him; and her tears, which she had at will, flowed from her in abundance; she had played her part, and prepared the good man to do very handsomely for her. We left the notary with our master, and she and I staid without in the antechamber, where the surgeon came to us, to give the canon a new and his last bleeding. But we would not let him enter the room. "Stay, Mr. Martin," says the governante to him, "you shall not go into Signior Sedillo's chamber now he is busy. There's the notary with him; and you shall not bleed him any more till his testament is finished." My dame and I were afraid the licentiate should die before it was done: but by good luck the act for which we were in so much pain was executed. The notary coming out of the chamber, clapt me on the shoulder, and said, smiling, "Thou art not forgotten, Gil Blas." I was overjoyed to hear it, and so well pleased with my master, for remembering me, that I promised to pray for him after he was dead, which soon happened; for the surgeon have blooded him once more, the poor old man. who was before but too weak, expired almost during the operation. As he was at his last gasp, the doctor came in, and seemed a little startled, as quick as he used to be in dispatching his patients. However, instead of imputing the death of the canon to his bleedings, and repeated draughts of hot water, he only said as he went away, There was not blood enough taken from him: neither has he drank hot water enough. The doctor's executioner, I mean the surgeon, seeing there was no more business for him, followed Signior Sangrado.

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No sooner was our master dead, but Dame Jacinta, Inesille, and I set up a howling, which was heard, by all the neighbourhood. Jacinta, who had the greatest reason to rejoice, so bewailed his death, that one would have thought she was the most afflicted woman in the world. The room in an instant was full of people, who came out of curiosity more than compassion. The relations of the defunct hearing he was dead, ran to our house, and sealed up every thing. They saw the governante in such affliction that they imagined at first, the canon had not made his will: but they soon understood, that it was done in all the forms, and had a codicil annexed to it. Upon opening it, they found the testator had bequeathed his best effects to Dame Jacinta and her daughter: and the relations of the deceased made a funeral oration on him, in terms which were by no means honourable to his memory. They also fell upon the governante, and bestowed some eulogies upon me too. It must be owned that in appearance I deserved them: the licentiate, rest the soul of him, to engage me to remember him as long as I lived, ordered this article to be inserted in the codicil: "Item, since Gil Blas is a lad who already has some literature, I leave him my library, all my books and manuscripts, without exception."

I could not imagine where this pretended library was. I had not seen any such thing in the house. I knew there were a few papers, and five or six books on a shelf in my master's closet; and that was all my legacy. The books were besides of no use to me. One was intitled *the compleat cook*; another a treatise of *indigestion, and the method of curing it*. The others were the four parts of the *Breviary*, half eaten away by the moth. As for the manuscripts, the most curious were some briefs and bills relating to a law-suit the canon had formerly

formerly had about his benefice. When I had examined my legacy with more attention than it deserved, I left it for his relations, who had envied it me so much. I restored also to them the coat I had of the licentiate, and took my own again, receiving my wages only for the fruit of my services. I left them as soon as I was paid off, and looked out for another place. Dame Jacinta, besides the money which was bequeathed her, by the help of a good friend, found means, while the licentiate was ill, to plunder him of his most valuable effects.

C H A P. III.

Gil Blas hires himself to Doctor Sangrado; and becomes a famous physician.

I Resolved to go to Signior Arias de Londonna, and search his register for another service; but as I was ready to enter the Turn-Again-Alley, where he lodged, I met Dr. Sangrado, whom I had not seen since my master's death. I took the liberty to salute him, and he knew me again presently, notwithstanding I had changed my habit: and told me he was glad to see me. "Child," says he, "I was thinking of thee this minute; I want an honest lad to serve me; and I believe thou wouldst do my business, if thou canst read and write. "If that is all, Sir," replied I, "I am for your purpose." "Sayest thou so?" cried he: "thou art my man then. Come along with me: thou shalt live pleasantly; and I will treat thee with distinction; I will give thee no wages; but thou shalt want for nothing. I will keep thee handsomely, and teach thee the great art of curing diseases. In a word, thou shalt rather be my pupil than my valet.

I accepted of the doctor's proposal, hoping that under so learned a master I should become an eminent physician. He took me home with him immediately,

immediately, to instal me in the employment which he proposed to me, which was, to write down the names and dwellings of the patients that sent for him when he was abroad. He kept a register for that purpose, wherein an old maid-servant whom he had for all his household affairs, marked their address; but, besides her ignorance of orthography, she wrote so ill, that the doctor often could not decipher it. He gave this book in charge to me; and it might be well called the *Register of the dead*; for hardly a man whose name was entered there, lived after it.

I wrote down, as I may say, the names of the persons who were bound for the other world, as the clerk of a stage-coach office writes down the names of those who take places. My pen was often in my hand; for there was not at that time a physician in Valladolid of more repute than Dr. Sangrado. He imposed on the public by a specious way of talking, and some lucky cures, which had done him more honour than he deserved. He did not want practice, nor consequently money. He did not spend it too profusely. We lived very frugally: our food was generally pease, beans, roasted apples, or cheese. He said those aliments agreed best with the stomach, being the most proper for trituration, that is to say more easily bruited. However, as light as they were of digestion, he would not allow us to surfeit ourselves, in which truly he shewed himself very moderate. But though he forbade the maid and me to eat much, to make amends, he permitted us to drink as much water as we would. Instead of setting us bounds in that, he sometimes cried, "Drink, children; health consists in the suppleness and humectation of parts. Drink water abundantly, it is an universal dissolvent. Water melts all the salts. Is the course of the blood slow? it quickens it. Is it too rapid? it checks its impetuosity. Our doctor was so honest in that himself, that he drank nothing but

but water, though he was pretty well in years. He defined old age to be a natural phthisis, which dried up and consumed us ; and, pursuant to this definition, he deplored the ignorance of those who called wine the old man's milk. He maintained that wine wore them out and destroyed them ; and said very eloquently, that that liquor is to them, as well as to all the world, a friend that betrays, and a pleasure that deceives.

Notwithstanding all his fine arguments, I had not been eight days in his house, before I was taken ill of a flux, and a violent pain in my stomach, which I was so bold as to attribute to the universal dissolvent, and the ill diet I lived upon. I complained to my master, hoping he would relax, and allow me a little wine at meals ; but he was too great an enemy to that liquor to consent to it. " If thou feelest a distaste at pure water," says he, " there are innocent helps to support the stomach against the insipidity of aqueous draughts: sage, for example, or balm, give it an agreeable taste ; and if you would make it still more delicious, you need only mix the flour of *œillet*, rosemary, or wild poppy." Whatever he could say in praise of water, and whatever recipe's he would have given me to improve my beverages, I drank it with so much moderation, that he observing, said, " I don't wonder, Gil Blas, you do not enjoy your health well ; you don't drink enough, friend. Water taken in small quantities serves only to lay open the bilious parts, and give them more activity ; instead of which, we ought to drown them by tempering them copiously. Lay aside this panic fear, which perhaps thou hast for frequent drinking. I will warrant the issue, and if thou dost not find it good for thee, tell me. Celsus will be my surety : that oracle of the Latins has written an admirable panegyric upon water : he tells us in express words, that those who excuse their drinking wine, on account of a weak stomach, do
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a manifest injustice to the stomachic powers, and make it only a cover for their sensuality."

That I might not appear indocile when I was entering into the career of physic, I seemed to be convinced that he was in the right. I even confessed that I was of his opinion; and, on his and Celsus's guaranty, continued to take large draughts of water to drown my choler: and though I found myself worse and worse every day, yet prejudice was too hard for experience. I had, as may be seen, a happy disposition to become a physician; but I could not always resist the violence of my ails, which grew upon me to such a point that I resolved to quit Dr. Sangrado's service; but he bestowed a new employment on me, which made me change my mind. "Child," says he to me one day, "hearken to me: I am not one of those hard, ungrateful masters, who let their domestics grow old in their service before they reward them. I am satisfied with thy conduct. I love thee, and, without expecting thou wilt serve me any longer, I will make thy fortune. I will discover to thee the whole mystery of the salutary art, which I have so many years professed. Other doctors make it consist in a thousand difficult sciences; but I will shorten the way, and spare thee the pains of studying physic, pharmacy, botany, and anatomy. Know, friend, all that is necessary, is bleeding and making them drink hot water: this is the secret for curing all the distempers in the world: yes, this wonderful secret which I reveal to thee, and which nature, impenetrable to my brethren, has not been able to keep from my observations, is all included in these two points, frequent bleeding, and drinking of water: I have nothing more to teach thee: thou knowest the very bottom of physic, and reaping the fruit of my long experience, thou wilt at once become as skilful as I am. Thou mayst also be assistant to me; thou shalt keep the register in the morning, and in the afternoon shalt

visit

visit some of my patients: while I take care of the nobility and clergy, thou shalt attend the third order for me; and when thou hast done so some time, I will get thee admitted into the faculty. Thou art a learned man, Gil Blas, before you be a physician; whereas others are a long time, and most of them all their lives physicians, before they are learned."

I thanked the doctor for having so speedily rendered me capable of becoming his substitute; and, to testify how sensible I was of his goodness to me, I assured him I would follow his opinions as long as I lived, even though they were contrary to Hippocrates. This assurance of mine was nevertheless a little insincere: I did not approve of his sentiments about the water, and resolved to drink wine as often as I visited my patients. I hung my coat upon a peg the second time, put on one of my master's, and assumed the air of a physician, whose profession I entered upon at the expense of all those that sent for me. I began with an Alguazil who was taken ill of a pleurisy. I ordered him to be blooded without mercy, and that he should have an immoderate portion of water. I, in the next place, was sent for by a pastry-cook, who was roaring out with the gout; I was no more sparing of his blood than I had been of the Alguazil's, and prescribed him a deluge of water also. I received twelve reals for my prescriptions; which gave me such a liking to my profession, that I resolved to spend the rest of my days in taking people's blood from them, and filling them up with water. As I was coming out of the pastry-cook's house, I met with Fabricio, whom I had not seen since Sedillo the licentiate's death. He gazed upon me some moments in a surprise, and then burst out into a fit of laughter, till he was ready to split his sides. Truly he had good reason to laugh: for I had a cloak that trailed on the ground; my coat and breeches were four times as long and as wide as they needed to have been, I might

might very well pass for an original. I let him have his laugh out, and could hardly forbear keeping him company; but I put a constraint on myself for decorum's sake, it being in the street, and the better to counterfeit the physician, who is no risible animal. Fabricio, who laughed so heartily at my ridiculous air, laughed still more at my serious one; and when his fit was a little over, "For heaven's sake, Gil Blas," says he, "who has equipped thee so pleasantly? What devil has disguised thee so?" "Not so fast, friend," said I: "shew respect to a new Hippocrates. Know that I am substitute to Dr. Sangrado, the most famous physician in Valladolid. I have lived with him these three weeks. He has shewn me the bottom of medicine; and not being able to attend all the sick that send for him, I am employed to assist him. He looks after the great folks, and I after the little ones." "Very well," replies Fabricio, "that is to say, he abandons to thee the blood of the common people, and reserves that of the quality to himself. I congratulate thee upon thy division. It is better to have to do with the populace than with the nobility. If a physician lives in the suburbs, his faults are less in view; and his murders make no noise. Yes, child," added he, "thy condition is to be envied; and, to talk like Alexander, if I were not Fabricio, I would be Gil Blas."

To let the son of the barber Nunnez see that he was not in the wrong when he extolled the happiness of my circumstances, I shewed him the reals given me by the Alguazil and the pastry cook. Then we entered a tavern to spend part of them. The drawer brought us some pretty good wine, which I thought to be much better than it was, having tasted none a long time. I drank large draughts; and with all due respect to the Latin oracle, I found that the stomachic powers were mightily refreshed by them. We did not soon part; but made ourselves

selves merry at the expense of our masters, according to the usual way of valets. Night coming on, we parted, after having promised to meet again the next day in the afternoon at the same place.

C H A P. IV.

Gil Blas continues the practice of a physician with as much success as capacity. The adventure of the ring recovered.

I Got home just about the time that Sangrado did. I told him what patients I had visited ; and gave him eight reals, which were all I had left of the twelve that were given me for my prescriptions. " Eight reals ! " cried he, when he had told them : " it is a small matter for two visits ; but we must take what we can get. " He kept six, and gave me the other two : " Here, Gil Blas, " continued he, " to begin a stock ; for thou shalt have a quarter-part of what thou takest. You will soon be rich, my friend ; for, God willing, we shall have a sickly time of it this year. "

I was contented with my proportion ; for resolving to keep back every day a quarter-part of what I received in the city ; and having another quarter of the remainder from him, that was a half of the whole, according to my arithmetic. This inspired me with a new ardour for physic. Next day, as soon as I had dined, I put on my substitute habit, and went about my business. I visited several patients of our register, and treated them all after the same manner, though they had different distempers. Hitherto matters had passed without making any noise ; and nobody as yet, thank heaven, had any thing to say against my prescriptions : but let a physician be ever so excellent, there will be those that censure him. I came at last to a grocer's, whose son had a dropsy. I found there a little blade of a doctor called *Cuchillo*, who was brought thither
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by a relation of the grocer's. I made very low bows to all that were present, especially to the person whom I took to be sent for to consult with me on the patient's disease. He saluted me with a grave air; and looking some time in my face with much attention, "Signior Doctor," says he, "I pray you to excuse my curiosity. I thought I had known all the physicians my brethren in Valladolid, but I must own to you that I have no manner of knowledge of you. You cannot have been long settled in this city." I replied, I was a young practitioner, and as yet did only prescribe under the auspices of Dr. Sangrado. "I congratulate you," says he very civilly, "upon your embracing the method of so great a man. I make no question you have already profited very much by his lessons, though you appear to be very young." He said this so naturally, that I could not tell whether he spoke seriously or bantered me. I was studying what to answer him, when the grocer interrupted our conversation, saying, "I am satisfied, Gentlemen, that both of you are perfect masters of the art of medicine. Pray look upon my son, and prescribe what you think proper for his cure. Upon this my brother doctor made his observations on the sick man; and having marked the symptoms which discovered the nature of the distemper, he demanded of me after what manner I thought we should manage him? "I am of opinion," replied I, "that he should be blooded every day, and take hot water abundantly." At this the other physician, smiling on me with a malicious air, said, "And are you of opinion that those remedies will save his life?" "No doubt of it," replied I, with great confidence, "they will have that effect, being specifics against all sorts of diseases; ask Dr. Sangrado." "Then Celsus was very much out," answered he, "when to cure a dropsy he enjoined the patient to abstain from eating or drinking." "Celsus," cried I, "is not my oracle. He

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is mistaken as well as others; and sometimes I affect to go quite contrary to his sentiments." "I perceive by your discourse," says Cuchillo, "that Dr. Sangrado would insinuate a sure and satisfactory method to young practitioners. Bleeding and water-drinking are his universal medicine. I am not at all surpris'd that so many honest gentlemen have perished under his hands." "No invectives," replied I hastily; "it does not become a man of your profession to talk so. I must tell you, Monsieur Doctor, that, for want of bleeding and drinking hot water, many sick men have been sent into the other world. If you have any thing to object against Signior Sangrado, put it into writing; he will answer you, and we shall see on whose side the laughers will be." "By St. James and St. Dennis," cried Cuchillo, in a great passion, "you do not know me, Sir; I can bite and scratch as well as another. I am not afraid of Dr. Sangrado, who with all his presumption and vanity is a mere ninny." The figure of the little doctor made me despise his rage. I answered him tartly, and he replied in the same manner, and we came immediately to fifty-cuffs. We had time to give one another some blows, and pluck out a handful of hair on each side, before the grocer and his kinsman could part us. When they had done, the master of the house paid me for my visit, and dismissed me, keeping my antagonist, who seemed to him to have the more skill of the two.

I had like to have met with another such ill adventure at a fat quirister's house who had a fever. I no sooner began to make mention of hot water, than he fell a railing at my specific, and cursing me for my prescription. He called me a thousand names, and threatened to have me thrown out at the window. I went out of his house much faster than I came in. I had no inclination to visit any more patients that day, and made what haste I could to meet Fabricio at the place we had appointed for
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our meeting. I found him there. We were both in a drinking humour, and got very merry; in which condition we returned home to our masters. Signior Sangrado did not perceive I was fuddled, because I told him the story of my quarrel with the doctor, with so much action, that he took my vivacity for an effect of the emotion our combat had put me into. Besides, he found himself concerned in the report I made; and was himself piqued against Cuchillo. "You did well, Gil Blas," said he, "to defend the honour of our remedies against a dwarf of the faculty. Does he pretend that aquatic beverages are not to be given in cases of dropsy? A blockhead! I will maintain the use of them is very proper. Yes," continued he, "water will cure all sorts of dropsies, as it is good for rheumatisms and jaundice. It is also excellent in those fevers, when the sick burn and freeze at the same time. It is marvellous even in those diseases that arise from cold serous phlegmatic humours. This opinion may seem strange to young physicians, such as Cuchillo; but it is very supportable in good medicine: and if those men were capable of arguing like philosophers, instead of railing at me, they would become my most zealous defenders."

He did not suspect my being disordered with wine, he was in such a passion: and to exasperate him the more, I had added some circumstances of my own head to my story. However, as full as he was of the matter, he perceived that I drank more water that evening than usual. The wine heated me; I was very dry, and took large draughts of water; but he thought I began to take a liking to his aquatics. "I find, Gil Blas," says he, smiling, "thou hast not now such an aversion to water; heaven be praised! you drink it like nectar: I do not wonder at it, my friend, I knew thou wouldst bring thyself to love it." "Sir," replied I, "every thing has its time. I would at this instant give a gallon

of wine for a pint of water." This answer charmed the doctor, who would not lose so fair an occasion to enlarge upon the excellence of water; he undertook to make a new eulogy on it; not like a cold orator, but like an enthusiast. "A thousand and a thousand times," cries he, "more estimable and more innocent were the houses of meeting of old than our modern taverns. The ancients did not meet to consume their estates and destroy their healths in gorging themselves with wine, but to have harmless conversation, and refresh themselves with hot water. We cannot sufficiently admire the foresight of the earliest masters of civil life, who erected public-houses, where hot water was given to all comers. Wine was then locked up in the apothecaries shops, that none might use it without the prescription of the physician. Oh what wisdom was that! it is without doubt," added he, "by a happy remain of that ancient frugality, worthy of the golden age, that some are yet found who like thee and me drink nothing but water, and who believe they preserve themselves from, or cure all diseases, by drinking warm water, which has not been boiled; for I have observed, that water, when it has been boiled, is heavier and more offensive to the stomach."

I could hardly forbear laughing, to hear him talk thus; however I kept my countenance as well as I could. Nay, I agreed with him as to the virtues of hot water. I condemned the use of wine, and pitied those men who unhappily took pleasure in so pernicious a beverage. The wine continuing to heat me still, I filled a huge cup with water; and after having taken a good draught, "Come, Sir," said I to my master, "let us drink this beneficial liquor. Let us revive in your house the wisdom and frugality of the ancients." He applauded me for saying so, and held out an hour longer in the praise of water, exhorting me never to drink any thing else. I

promised him to take a large quantity every night, to use myself to it; and that I might keep my promise the more easily, I went to bed with a resolution to go every day to the tavern. The quarrel which I had at the grocer's, did not hinder my prescribing next day fresh bleedings and fresh doses of hot water. As I was coming out of a house, where I had been to visit a poet who had a frenzy, I met an old woman in the street, who asked me if I was a physician? I told her, Yes. "I then most humbly entreat you," replied she, "to go along with me. My niece was taken ill yesterday, and I cannot find out her distemper." I followed the old woman, who conducted me to a house, where I entered a room pretty well furnished, and saw a woman abed. I drew near to observe her; immediately her features struck me; and, after having a while examined her face a little better, I knew her again to be Camilla, who had acted her part so well with me before. As for her, she did not know me, either through the disorder her distemper put her into, or through the alteration of my dress, being now in the garb of a doctor. I took her by the hand, to feel her pulse, and perceived my ring was upon her finger. I was overjoyed to light upon a treasure I had so much right to seize, and I had a great mind to do it at the instant; but considering that those women might cry out, and Don Raphael, or some other defender of the fair sex, run to their help, I took care not to give way to the temptation. I thought it was better to dissemble, and consult Fabricio thereupon; I fixed upon this last resolution. In the mean time the old woman was very earnest with me to tell her what distemper her niece had. I was not such a fool as to own I could not tell. On the contrary, I pretended to be master of it; and said gravely, in imitation of Signior Sangrado, that her illness was occasioned for want of perspiration: that she must be let blood immediately,

ly, bleeding being the natural substitute of transpiration. I also ordered her hot water, that all things might be done according to our rules.

I shortened my visit as much as I could, and hastened away to the son of Nunnez, whom I met just as he was coming out of his master's house, who had sent him on an errand. I informed him of my new adventure, and asked his advice, whether I had best have Camilla apprehended by the magistrates? "No," replied he, "by no means; that is not the way to have your ring again. Those sort of men don't love to make restitutions. Remember thy being imprisoned at Astorga, what became of thy horse, thy money, and thy cloaths. Did not they keep all? The best way will be to make use of our own industry to recover thy diamond, I will contrive how to do it. I will think upon it as I go to the hospital, where I have two or three words to tell the purveyor from my master. Meet me at our tavern, and do not be impatient; I will be with thee in a very little time."

Nevertheless, it was three hours before he came to me: I did not know who he was at first: besides that, he had changed his habit, and tied his hair up; a false mustachio covered half his face. He had a sword on, the hilt of which was at least three foot in circumference. He marched at the head of five men, who, like him, had their bushy mustachios, and their long rapiers, looking all like persons of resolution. "Your servant, Signior Gil Blas," says he, accosting me: "behold an Alguazil of a new make, and serjeants of the same turn attending him; carry us to that woman that has robbed you of the diamond, and take my word for it, we will make her restore it." I embraced Fabricio at these words, who told me the stratagem he designed to use for me; and gave him to understand that I highly approved of the expedient he had contrived. I also saluted the counterfeit ser-

jeants, who were three footmen, and two journey-men barbers of his acquaintance, whom he had engaged in this business. I made the brigade drink, and we went straight to Camilla's, where we arrived just as it was dusk. We knocked at the door, which was shut. The old woman opened it, and, taking the persons that were with me for officers who did not come thither without reason, she was terribly affrighted. "Don't be afraid, mother," said Fabricio; "we come hither, only about a small affair, which will be soon over." At these words we went forward, and entered the sick person's chamber, conducted by the old woman, who lighted us along with a candle in a silver candlestick. I took the candle, went to the bed-side, and looked in Camilla's face very fully, that she might know me. "Behold," cried I, "thou cheat, the credulous Gil Blas, whom thou hast so wronged: have I met with thee at last? The corregidor has my petition against thee, and this Alguazil is ordered to apprehend thee." "Mr. Officer," added I, "do your duty." "I need not be put in mind of that," replied he, heightening his voice; "I shall take hold of that creature; I have had a note of her name a long while in my register. Come, get you up, Madam," continued he; "dress immediately, I will be your gentleman usher, and lead you to one of the best jails in Valladolid." At these words, Camilla, as ill as she was, perceiving the two serjeants with huge mustachios were about to take her out of bed by force, raised herself up, joining her hands in a suppliant manner, and, with a look which shewed the fright she was in, cried out to me, "Signior Gil Blas, have pity on me, I conjure you, by the chaste mother to whom you owe your birth: though I am very guilty, I am yet more miserable: I will give you your diamond, therefore don't ruin me." Saying this, she pulled the ring off her finger, and gave it to me. But I answered, "that my diamond
alone

alone would not satisfy me ; I must have my thousand ducats also which I had been robbed of in my furnished lodging." "As for the ducats, Signior, do not demand them of me," replied Camilla, "the traitor Raphael, whom I have not seen from that time to this, ran away with them that very night." "Poor soul," says Fabricio, "dost thou think it is sufficient to clear thee, to pretend thou hast none of the spoil ? Thou shalt not come off so. It is enough that you are one of Don Raphael's accomplices, to deserve an inquiry into your past life. You must have many things upon your conscience. Be pleased to go to prison with me, and there thou mayst make thy general confession. This good woman shall bear thee company : I doubt not she can tell Monsieur the corregidor a hundred pretty stories which will be very entertaining to him." Upon this the two women did what they could to sweeten us. They filled the chamber with cries, complaints, and lamentations. While the old woman on her knees, sometimes before the Alguazil, sometimes before the serjeants, endeavoured to excite their compassion. Camilla begged me, in the most moving manner, to save her out of the hands of justice. I made as if her prayers had prevailed on me, "Mr. Officer," said I to the son of Nunnez, "since I have my diamond, I am satisfied ; I would not be the death of this woman." "Don't tell me of your humanity," replied he ; "I have something else to mind. I must discharge my office. I have express orders to apprehend these wretches : Monsieur the corregidor will make examples of them." "For Heaven's sake," said I, "don't be so cruel, but have mercy upon them, and accept of the present these ladies will make you for your trouble." "That is another thing," replied he ; "that is a figure of rhetoric which is well placed. Come, what is it they will give me ?" "I have a pearl necklace," cried Camilla, "and two pendants, of a consider-

able price." "If they came from the Philippine isles," said he, interrupting her, "I will not meddle with them." "You may be assured they are right," replied she, "I warrant they are fine." At the same time she ordered the old woman to bring a little box, out of which she took the necklace and the pendants. She gave them both to Monsieur the Alguazil. Though he knew no more of pearl than I did, yet he did not question their being right. He looked upon them very attentively, and said, "They appear to be what they should be; and if the silver candlestick which Signior Gil Blas has in his hand, be added to them I will not answer for my fidelity." "I don't believe," cried I to Camilla, "you will break off an accommodation so much to your advantage for a trifle." Pronouncing these words, I took the candle out, and gave the candlestick to Fabricio, who, contenting himself with what was offered, perhaps because he saw nothing in the room besides that could be conveniently carried off, said, "Farewell, my princesses, be easy, I will speak to Monsieur the corregidor, and represent you to him as white as snow. We know how to give things what turn we please, and never make true reports, but when we are not obliged to make false ones."

C H A P. V.

The sequel of the adventure of the recovered ring. Gil Blas quits the practice of physick, and the city of Valladolid.

AFTER we had thus executed Fabricio's project, we left Camilla's house rejoicing at the success, which surpassed our expectation, for we reckoned only upon the ring. We took the rest as we could get it. We were so far from making any scruple of robbing the courtezans, that we thought we had done a meritorious act. "Gentlemen," says Fabricio to us, when we were got into the street, "I think the

the best thing we can do, is to return to our tavern, and make merry all night. To-morrow we will sell the candlestick, the necklace, and the pendants, and divide the money amongst us, like brethren: this done each of us shall return home, and make the best excuse he can to his master." The opinion of Monsieur the Alguazil seemed to us to be very judicious: we returned to our tavern, some imagining they could easily invent an excuse for lying abroad, and others not caring whether their masters turned them off or not.

We ordered a good supper to be got ready, and sat down to it with as much appetite as gaiety. We were very pleasant all the while, and especially Fabricio, who knew how to keep up conversation, diverted the whole company. There escaped him I cannot tell how many strokes of Castilian wit, as good as the Attic of old. When we were in the midst of our mirth, an unforeseen event disturbed all our joy. A well-made man entered the room where we were at supper, attended by two others of most unpromising aspect. After these came three more; and after them three and three, till they made a dozen. They were armed with carabines, swords, and bayonets. We soon perceived they were the watch, and it was not hard for us to guess their business. We at first made a shew of resistance, but they surrounded us in an instant, and kept us quiet, as well on account of their number as their fire arms. "Gentlemen," says the captain of them, with a bantering air, "I understand by what artifice you have lately taken a ring from a certain she-adventurer; it was dexterously done, and you deserve a public reward, which without question you will meet with. The law, that has provided a lodging for you, will not fail to acknowledge so fine an effort of genius." All those to whom this discourse was addressed, were

in terrible confusion. We changed colour, and in our turn were possessed with the same fear as we had occasioned in Camilla. However Fabricio, though he looked pale and confounded, offered to justify us. "Signior," said he, we had no ill design, and therefore ought to be forgiven this little trick." "What a duce" replied the captain in a heat, "do you call this a little trick? Do not you know that it is a hanging matter? Besides that, no man is permitted to do justice for himself: you took a candlestick, a necklace, and diamond earrings; and which is still worse, to accomplish this robbery, you turned yourselves into serjeants. Rogues disguise themselves like honest men to do ill. You will be very happy if you escape without a halter." When he had given us to understand that the matter was more serious than we at first took it to be, we fell at his feet, and prayed him to have pity on our youth; but our prayers were to no purpose. He rejected the proposition we made him to deliver up the candlestick, the necklace, and the pendants. He refused even my ring, perhaps because it was offered in company. In fine, he was inexorable. He caused my companions to be disarmed, and carried us all to prison. As we were carrying along, one of his serjeants told me, that the old woman who lived with Camilla, suspecting us not to be really officers belonging to the courts of justice, dogged us to the tavern; and finding her suspicions to be well grounded, she gave information of us to the captain of the watch, to be revenged of us.

The first thing the officers did, was to search us. The necklace, the pendants, and the silver candlestick were immediately taken from us. They took from me also my ring, and the Philippine isle rubies, which I had unfortunately in my pockets. Nay, they did not leave me so much as the reals I had

had got that day by my prescriptions : by which I perceived that the officers belonging to the courts of justice at Valladolid understood their office as well as those at Astorga, and that the manners of those gentleman were every where alike. While they were taking my jewels and money from me, the captain of the watch reported our adventure to the magistrates. The matter was so extraordinary, that the greatest part of them thought we deserved to be trussed up for it: others, less severe, said we might come off for two hundred good lashes, and some years service at sea. We were shut up in a dungeon, to wait for the sentence of Monsieur the corregidor. We lay on straw, which was by no means so well strewed as that in a stable with which horses are littered. We had staid there longer, and not been let out but to go to the galleys, if Signior Manuel Ordonez had not heard of our affair, and resolved to get Fabricio discharged ; which he could not do without delivering us also. He was a man in great esteem in the city. He spared no solicitations : and what by his own credit, and that of his friends, in three days time he procured our discharge. But we did not go out of that place as we got in. The candlestick, the necklace, the pendants, my ring, and rubies all the remained there ; which put me in mind of those verses in Virgil, which begin with these words, *Sic vos non vobis*, &c.

As soon as we were set free, we returned to our masters. Dr. Sangrado received me kindly. " Poor Gill Blas," says he, " I did not hear of thy misfortunes till this morning. I was preparing to solicit for thee vigorously. Thou must comfort thyself for this accident, my friend, and apply more than ever to physick." I answered, " It was my design ; and I did so accordingly. So far from wanting business, that it happened luckily, as my master foretold, to be a sickly time, that he had

his hands full of patients. The small-pox and malignant fevers reigned in the city and suburbs. All the doctors in Valladolid were full of practice, and we in particular. There did not a day go over our heads, but each of us visited eight or ten patients. Of consequence there was a great deal of water drank, and much blood let. But I cannot tell how it happened, they all died. Either we managed them very ill, or their distempers were incurable. We rarely visited the same sick man thrice. At the second, we were either informed that he was going to be buried, or found him at the point of death. Being a young physician, my heart was not sufficiently hardened for murders: I was grieved at so many fatal events, which might be imputed to me. "Sir," said I one evening to Dr. Sangrado, "I call Heaven to witness I follow your method exactly, yet all my patients go to the other world. One would think they died on purpose to bring our practice into discredit; I met two carying to the grave this afternoon." "Child," says he, "I might tell thee the same of myself: I have not often the satisfaction to cure the persons that fall into my hands; and if I was not certain of the principles I follow, I should take my remedies to be contrary to almost all the diseases I have in hand." "If you will be ruled by me, Sir," replied I, "we will change our method, and out of curiosity give our patients some chymical preparations: The worst that can happen is, that they will produce the same effects as our hot water and bleeding." I would willingly make the experiment," says he, "if it would not have an ill consequence; for I have published a book in vindication of frequent bleeding and hot-water drinking. Wouldst thou have me decry my own work?" "You are in the right, Sir," replied I, "you must not give an occasion to your enemies to triumph over you. They will say you have suffered yourself to be undeceived,

deceived, you will lose your reputation; rather let the people, the nobility, and the clergy perish. Let us continue our wonted practice. Our brethren, after all, notwithstanding the aversion they have for bleeding, do no greater wonders than we: and I believe our specifics are as good as their drugs."

We proceeded in our old course, and in such a manner, that in less than six weeks we made as many widows and orphans as the siege of Troy. One would have thought the plague was in Valladolid, there were so many funerals. There came every day to our house fathers, to demand an account of the sons we had robbed them of; or uncles to reproach us for the death of their nephews. As for the nephews and sons whose fathers and uncles fared the worse for our medicines, they came not to our house. The husbands of the wives we made away with, were also very discreet, and did not scold us on that score. The persons afflicted, whose reproaches it was necessary we should wipe off, were sometimes outrageous in their grief, and called us blockheads and murderers. They kept no bounds; I was enraged at their epithets; but my master, who had been used to it, was not at all concerned at it. Perhaps I should have accustomed myself to them as well as he, if heaven, doubtless to take away one of the scourges of the sick at Valladolid, had not given me a disgust to physic, which I practised with so little success.

There was a tennis-court in our neighbourhood, where the idle met every day: among whom was one who set up for judge and bully of the place. He was a Biscayan, and his name *Don Rodriguez de Mondragon*. He was about thirty years old, not very tall, but lean, sparkling, and strong. Besides two little eyes that rolled in his head, and which seemed to threaten all whom he looked upon, he
had

had a flat nose which hung over a red mustachio that curled up to his temple. He spoke so hoarse and so hastily, that he made every one afraid. This bully had made himself tyrant of the tennis-court. His decisions among the players were all arbitrary and imperious; and there was no appealing from his judgment without running the risk of a challenge. This Signior Don Rodrigo, who, though he put a Don before his name, was no better than a butcher, had gained the affections of the mistress of the house. She was a rich widow of about forty years old, pretty well for her person. Her husband had been dead about a year and a quarter. I cannot imagine how she could take a liking to this bully of the racket; it was not for his beauty, she must see something in him that nobody else did. Be it as it will, she had a kindness for him, and resolved to marry him. But as all things were making ready for consummation, she fell sick; and it was her bad luck to have me for her physician. If her distemper had not been a malignant fever, my remedy was sufficient to make it one. In four days time I put all the tennis-court into mourning. The mistress of it went the same way I sent all my patients, and her relations took possession of her estate. Don Rodrigo, made desperate by the loss of his mistress, or rather the hope of a very advantageous match, was not contented with flinging fire and flames at me; he swore he would run me through the guts, where-ever he met me. A charitable neighbour gave me the information of his oath, and advised me not to go out of our house, for fear of meeting this devil of a man. This advice, which I had no mind to neglect, filled me with trouble and fear. The Biscayan was always in my mind, and before my eyes; I could not be at rest a moment. This made me out of love with physic; and I thought of nothing but how to deliver myself from the apprehension

prehension in which I lived. I took my embroidered coat again ; and having bid my master adieu, notwithstanding the many arguments he used, to persuade me to stay with him, I left the city at break of day, not without fear of meeting Don Rodrigo in my way.

C H A P. VI.

What road he took when he left Valladolid ; and what man he met by the way.

I Made as much haste as I could when I got out of the town ; and every now and then looked behind me to see if I was not pursued by the terrible Biscayan. My head was so full of him, that I took every tree and bush to be him. My heart failed me at the least noise : and I did not think myself safe till I got two or three leagues off Valladolid. I then slackened pace, and jogged on pretty cheerfully towards Madrid, whither I proposed to myself to go. I was sorry for nothing in departing from Valladolid, but leaving Fabricio, my dear Pylades, to whom I had not time to bid adieu. I did not grieve for losing the profession of a physician ; on the contrary, I begged God to forgive me for having practised it at all. I was well pleased however with the money I had in my pocket, though it was the purchase of my murders. I was like those women that leave off whoring, but keep still the money they made of it. I had as many reals as came to five ducats. That was all my stock. I depended upon it to carry me to Madrid, where I doubted not I should get a good place. Besides, I longed mightily to see that city, which I heard so much talk of, as being an epitome of all the world's wonders.

While I was meditating on what had been told me of it, and pleasing myself with the thoughts of what I should see there, I heard a man behind me

me coming on singing. He had a knapsack at his back, a guitar hanging about his neck, and a long sword by his side. He walked so fast, that he soon overtook me. It was one of the journeymen-barbers that had been imprisoned with me about the adventure of the ring. We knew one another presently, and were surprised to meet thus unexpectedly on the highway. I expressed a great joy at having him for a companion, and he did as much on my account. I told him why I left Valladolid; and he, on his part, informed me that he had had a quarrel with his master, and they had mutually bidden one another adieu for ever. "If I would have staid at Valladolid," added he, "there are ten shops I could have had my choice of; for, without vanity, I may say there is not a barber in Spain that knows how to handle a razor like me, or curl a mustachio: but I have a mind to return to my own country, from whence I have been ten years absent. I want to breathe some of my native air, and know how it goes with my relations. It will not be long before I shall be with them; for they dwell but at Olmedo, a great village on this side Segovia.

I resolved to accompany the barber to that village, and thence go to Segovia, to get some convenience to convey myself to Madrid. We fell into discourse of indifferent things as we continued our journey. He was a good-humoured merry lad; and after we had travelled together about an hour, he asked me if my stomach was not come? I replied, he should see that at the first inn we came to. "Let us not stay for that," says he, "I have somewhat to breakfast on in my budget. I always carry provisions with me when I travel the road. I do not burden myself with cloaths, linen, and such useles luggage. I put nothing in it, but provisions of the mouth, my razors, and wash-balls." I applauded his prudence, and con-

sented

sented to halt with him. I was hungry, and proposed to make a meal on my comrade's cargo, after what he had said of it. We went into a by-place, and sat down on the grass. The barber pulled out his provender, which consisted of five or six onions, a piece of bread, and some cheese. But what he valued himself on, was a bottle, which he said was full of rare wine. Though our entertainment was not very nice, yet we were so hungry, that neither of us found fault with it. We emptied the bottle, which held about a quart, and did not contain any thing worthy the panegyric the barber bestowed upon it. When he had thus breakfasted, we rose, and proceeded very gaily on our journey. Fabricio had told me that this barber had met with many adventures; and he desiring me to tell him mine, in hopes of hearing them, I gave him satisfaction. I then prayed him to oblige me, by giving me the story of his life. "My story," cried he, "is not worth telling. It has nothing in it but plain facts. However, since we have no better subject to discourse of, I will tell it you, such as it is." Accordingly he began it in the following manner.

C H A P. VII.

The story of the Journeyman barber.

FERNAND Perez de la Fuente my grandfather, (I love to trace things from the beginning), after having lived a barber fifty years in the village of Olmedo, died, and left four sons behind him: the eldest, called *Nicolas*, possessed himself of his shop, and succeeded him in his profession, The second son, *Bertrand*, took to a trade, and became a mercer. Thomas, the third, was a schoolmaster. And Pedro, the fourth, finding he had a genius for the belles lettres, sold a small estate he had, and went to make the most of it at Madrid.

Madrid. The three other brothers remained at Olmedo, where they married three young women, labourers daughters, who brought them not much money: but to make amends for it, they blessed them with abundance of children. They seemed to outvie one another in getting them. My mother, for her part, was fairly delivered of six in the five first years of her marriage. I was one of them. My father taught me to shave betimes; and when I was fifteen years of age, he put this knapsack on my back, tied a long sword to my side, and said, "Go, Diego, thou art now able to get thy living; go travel the country, it will teach thee thy trade better than staying at home: go, and let me not see thee at Olmedo again, till thou hast seen all Spain. Let me not so much as hear thee named." At these words he embraced me cordially, and turned me out of doors.

This was the farewell I had from my father. As for my mother, she had not such a hard heart. She seemed troubled at my going: the tears trickled down her cheeks; and she slipped a ducat into my hand. I left Olmedo in this condition, and took the road to Segovia. I had not gone two hundred yards before I examined my budget; I longed to see what was in the inside of it, and to have an exact knowledge of my treasure. I found a razor-case, with two razors in it, very well worn, a leather to set them upon, and a bit of soap. Besides this, there was a new canvas shirt, and a pair of my father's old shoes; and what rejoiced my heart more than all the rest, twenty reals in an old rag. This was my stock. You may perceive by this, that Mr. Nicolas the barber depended very much on my dexterity, since he accoutred me so indifferently. Nevertheless, the possession of a ducat and twenty reals must needs be charming to a young man. I thought my purse would be inexhaustible, and went on transported with joy,
sometimes

sometimes looking on my rapier, which hung at my heels, and every now and then got between my legs, and was like to overset me.

I arrived in the evening at Ataquines very hungry. I lodged at an inn; and, as if I was in circumstances to spend my money freely, demanded of my landlord what he had for supper? My landlord looked upon me wistfully; and, perceiving what sort of a man he had to do with, he said, "We will satisfy you, young gentleman; you shall be treated like a prince." He then led me into a little room, where, half an hour after, they brought me an old rabbit, which, in all probability, had been the mother of many that had made ragouts last year. They accompanied this admirable dish with some wine, "so good," says he, "the king does not drink better." However, I perceived it was pricked; but I swallowed it as greedily as I did the rabbit, which being too tough to be dispatched by the teeth, went down in whole pieces. To finish my treatment like a prince, I was put into a bed much more proper to keep a man awake than asleep. It was so short, I could not stretch out my legs, as short as I was myself: The bottom was only a little straw, and that of the coarsest sort: Atop was a sheet doubled, which had perhaps served a hundred travellers since the last washing. Nevertheless, my stomach was so full of the old coney, and the delicious wine my landlord boasted of, that, thanks to my youth and my constitution, I slept soundly, and passed the night without indigestion. The next day, when I had breakfasted, and paid well for my good cheer, I went on my journey, and arrived safely at Segovia. I was no sooner there, than by good luck I lighted on a shop where I was received for my board and lodging. I staid there six months only. A journeyman-barber, whom I came acquainted with, debauched me, and I departed with him for Madrid. I easily got a place there on the same terms

terms as at Segovia. It was a well accustomed shop. It stood near the church of St. Cress; and its neighbourhood to the prince's theatre brought a croud of customers to it. My master's two journeymen and I were hardly enow to shave them. I saw people of all conditions, and among others, players and authors. Two of the latter happened to be one day together in our shop: they talked of nothing but the poets and poems of the time. Among the former I heard them name my uncle, which made me more attentive to what they said. "Don Juan de Zavaleta," says one of them, "is an author which the public ought not to make account of. He has no fire nor fancy. His last play is intolerable." "And what is Louis Velez de Guevara worth, I pray?" replied the other; "was there ever such stuff seen?" They then named several other poets, whose names I have forgotten. I only remember they railed at them plentifully. As for my uncle, they made honourable mention of him. They both agreed that he was a man of merit. "Yes," cries one of them, "Don Pedro de la Fuente is an excellent author. There is a great deal of pleasantry and learning in his works, which are piquant and full of salt. I do not wonder both court and town like him, and that he has several pensions from the grandees. He has saved a good parcel of money out of them. He has his lodging and diet at the Duke de Medina Celi's. He spends nothing; and must be very rich." I lost not a word of what the poets said of my uncle. We had heard at home that he made a noise at Madrid by his writings; some people who passed through Olmedo told us so; but he never letting us hear from him, and seeming to shake us off, our family did not trouble their heads about him. However, I resolved not to lose such an opportunity, but to make myself known to him as soon as I found how it was with him, and knew where he lived. One thing per-
plexed

plexed me a little ; the authors called him *Don Pedro*. This *Don* gave me some difficulty, and I was afraid it might be some other poet, and not my uncle. Nevertheless, I came to a resolution to see whether it was he, or no. I imagined he might become a gentleman as well as a wit. In order to find him out, I dressed myself one morning, and with my master's leave went to visit him, not a little proud to be the nephew of a man who had acquired such a reputation by his genius. Barbers are not the least susceptible of vanity of any men in the world. I began to have a great opinion of myself ; and, walking with a stately air, I inquired the way to the Duke-de Medina Celi's. When I came to the gate, I asked the porter for Signior Don Pedro de la Fuente. The porter, hearing him named, pointed to a little staircase at the farther end of a court, and said, " Go up those stairs, and knock at the first door on the right hand." I did as he bade me : I knocked at the door. A young man came out to me, of whom I demanded if Signior Don Pedro de la Fuente lodged there ? " Yes," replied he ; " but you cannot speak with him at present." " I should be glad to have one word with him," said I, " because I bring him some news from his relations." " If you brought news from the Pope," replied he, " I would not introduce you now into his chamber. He is writing ; and, when he writes, one must have a care of disturbing him. He will not be visible till noon : go, and return at that time." I went thence into the city, which I walked about, contemplating the reception I should have from my uncle. " I believe," said I to myself, " he will be overjoyed to see me." I judged of him by myself, and expected that our meeting would be a very joyful one. I did not fail of returning at the time appointed. " You are come very opportunely," says his valet ; " my master is going out ; stay a little, I will tell him you
are

are here." He left me in the antechamber, returned a moment after, and conducted me to his master, who I presently knew to be my uncle, he was so like uncle Thomas. I saluted him with a most profound reverence, and told him I was the son of Master Nicholas de la Fuente, barber, at Olmedo: that I had followed the same trade as a journeyman in Madrid three weeks, and intended to travel all Spain to improve myself. While I was speaking, I observed my uncle mused. It was plain he was in suspense whether to disown me, or shake me off as dexterously as he could. He chose the latter. He affected to smile; and said, "Well, friend, how do thy father and thy uncle do? how does it go with them?" I then began to give him an account of the copious propagation of our family. I named him all the children male and female, and added to the list their godfathers and godmothers. He did not seem to be much concerned at what I said; and when I had done, "Diego," said he, "I approve mightily of thy travelling the country to perfect thyself in thy trade; and I advise thee not to stay any longer in Madrid. It is a place destructive to youth; thou wilt be ruined here, child: thou wilt do better to go to the other cities of the kingdom; people are not so corrupt there. Go then," continued he; "and when thou art about to depart, let me see thee again. I will give thee a pistole to carry thee through Spain." At these words he pushed me softly out of the room, and sent me home.

I had not the sense to perceive that he wanted to have me out of Madrid. I returned to our shop, and gave my master an account of my visit. He had no more thoughts than I of my uncle Don Pedro's intention. "I am not of his opinion," said he: "instead of running rambling about the country, you had better fix yourself in the city. Your uncle knows so many people of quality, he may easily get you a place in a good family, and by degrees
you

you may make your fortune there." I liked this discourse extremely, and two days after went to my uncle again, to propose to him to make use of his credit to get me a place in some nobleman's house : but he did not approve of the proposal. A vain man, who dined every day with one person of quality or other, was not willing to see his nephew at the footman's table, while he was at the lord's. Little Diego would have made Signior Don Pedro blush. He fell upon me therefore, and reproved me then with a very angry look, "How! you young rascal you! Will you leave your trade? What rogues have been advising thee to thy ruin? Go to them, get out of my apartment, and never set foot here again, otherwise I shall have thee chastised as thou deservest." These words stunned me, much more the tone with which my uncle spoke them. I retired with the tears in my eyes, very much troubled that he should be so cruel to me. But, being naturally lively and proud, I soon gave over weeping. My grief turned to indignation; and I resolved to leave so ill a relation where I found him, having hitherto lived without him. I thought of nothing but cultivating my talent. I minded my business. I shaved day and night: and, to recreate myself now and then, learned to play on the guitar. My master on that instrument was an old Signior Escudero, whom I shaved. He had formerly been a chantor in a cathedral. His name was *Marcus d' Obregon*. He was a discreet person, and had as much wit as experience. He loved me as dearly as if I had been his own son. He was gentleman-usher to a doctor's wife, who lived about thirty yards off us. I used to go to him every night when I had done work; and we two sitting on the threshold of the door, made a little concert, with which the neighbourhood was not at all displeased. Not that we had very good voices, but we both performed our parts pretty well, at least enough to please

please those that heard us. We particularly diverted Donna Margellina the doctor's wife. She came in to the entry to hearken to us, and obliged us to give her some encores, when the airs were to her liking. Her husband was as well entertained with us as she was. Though he was a Spaniard and an old man, he was not in the least jealous of her. Besides, his practice took him up wholly; and as he used to come home every night from visiting his patients very much fatigued, so he went to bed betimes, and did not mind our serenading his wife. Perhaps he thought our music was not so charming as to make any dangerous impressions upon her; and he had too much confidence in his wife's conduct to suspect her. Margellina was young and handsome, but withal so coy, that she would hardly suffer a man to ogle her. She did not think there was any harm in listening to our music; and we might sing or play as much as we pleased, she took no offence at it.

Coming one evening to the doctor's door, intending to divert myself there, according to custom, I found the old gentleman usher waiting for me. He took me by the hand, and said, he would have me take a walk before we began our concert. He then led me into a by-street, where, thinking we were private enough, he began his discourse thus, in a melancholy tone: "Don Diego, I have something to tell you in particular. I am afraid, child, that we shall both of us repent amusing ourselves every night with serenades at my master's door. I have certainly a kindness for you. I am glad I have taught you to play on the guitarre, and sing: but, if I had foreseen the mischief that is likely to come of it, I should have made choice of another place for us to practise our lessons in." I was frightened at what he said, and desired him to explain himself; for if we were in any danger, I should be willing to get out of it as fast as I could. "I will tell you," replied he, "what

"what I have to say, and then guess you the danger.

"When I entered into the doctor's service, which was about a year ago, he told me one morning, presenting me to his wife, "That is your mistress, Marcos; you are to wait on her where-ever she goes." I was extremely taken with Donna Margellina, I thought her wonderfully handsome, and was particularly charmed with her fine carriage." "Signior," replied I to the doctor, "I am too happy in serving so lovely a lady." Margellina was displeased at what I said, and cried, "You are a pretty fellow indeed, and take upon you more than becomes you. I shall not suffer such things to be said to me." Such rude words from such sweet lips were a strange surprize to me. I could not reconcile them to the softness of her air. Her husband was used to them, and valued himself upon having a wife of so rare a character. "Marcos," says he to me, "my wife is a prodigy of virtue;" and perceiving she was putting on her scarf, and preparing to go to church, he bade me attend her. We were no sooner got into the street, than, what is not extraordinary in such cases, several men, smitten with the beauty of Donna Margellina, said very kind things to her as she passed along. You cannot imagine what silly and ridiculous answers she made them. They were all amazed; and could not conceive that there was a woman in the world who did not love to be flattered. "Do not you hear, Madam," said I, "what those gentlemen say to you? One had better be silent than give hard words." "No, no," replied she, "I will have those insolent fellows know that I am not a woman who will suffer them to fail in their respect to me." In short, she was so impertinent that I could not help telling her what I thought of it, whether she liked it or no. I represented to her, with as much submission as I could, that she did an injury to nature, and
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spoiled

spoiled a thousand good qualities by her savage humour ; that a complaisant well-bred woman might render herself amiable without the assistance of beauty ; whereas a beautiful woman, without good breeding and complaisance, would become contemptible. A great deal more I said upon the same subject, tending all to correct her manners. I was afraid she would have resented my lessons, and given me a severe reproof for them ; but she bore them, contenting herself with taking notice of what I said then, or at other times to the same purpose. I grew weary of admonishing her in vain, and abandoned her to the fierceness of her nature. In the mean time, what do ye think ? this rude temper, this proud woman is within these two months entirely altered. She is civil and good-humoured to every body. She is not the same Margellina, who always answered men rudely. She now says the most obliging things in the world. She likes now to be flattered, to be told she is handsome, and that a man cannot look on her with safety. One can hardly imagine how she is changed ; and what you ought to be most surprised at, is, you yourself are the occasion of so great a miracle : yes, my dear Diego," continues he, " it is you who have thus metamorphosed Donna Margellina : you have turned the tigress into a lamb ; in a word, all her thoughts run upon you. I have observed it more than once ; and either I don't know what sort of creatures women are, or she is passionately in love with you. This, my son, is the sad news I have to acquaint you with, and the unhappy conjuncture we are fallen into."

" I don't see, replied I to the old squire, " that there is any thing in all this which we need very much grieve for ; nor that it is a misfortune for me to be beloved by a pretty lady." " You talk like a young man, Diego," said he ; " you don't perceive the snake that is in the grass. You have

regard to nothing but the pleasure, but I have respect to the pains with which it is attended. It will all come out at last. If you continue to sing at our door, you will inflame Margellina still more and more; and she will perhaps in the end become so weak as to let Dr. Oloroso her husband see it. Though he is now so very complaisant, because he thinks he has no reason to be jealous; he will then grow enraged against thee, and be revenged on her; and you may imagine that neither you nor I shall come off very well on this occasion." "Well, Signior Marcos," replied I, "I submit to your reasons, and will follow your advice." All that we need do," says he, "is, to give over our serenades. Don't you appear before my mistress any more. When she does not see you, she will be quiet: stay at home, I will come to you; and we may play there upon the guitar without running any risk." "Agreed," replied I, "and I promise you never to set foot within your doors more." Indeed I resolved not to sing again at the doctor's gate, but to keep close to my shop, since I was a person so dangerous to be seen.

However, honest Marcos found in a little time that the means, he proposed to extinguish Donna Margellina's fires, had a quite contrary effect. The lady, finding that we did not sing for two nights together, asked him why we gave over our concert, and what was the reason she did not see me?" He answered, "I was so busy that I had not a moment to spare for pleasure." She seemed satisfied with that excuse, and bore my absence for three days longer pretty well; but then she lost all patience, and said to her gentleman-usher, "You impose upon me. Marcos; Diego has some other reason for not coming hither. Tell me what it is, I command you; hide nothing from me." I invented a new excuse for him. "Madam," said I, "since you will know all, I must tell you, that after we

have been playing our concert, it has often happened when he came home, that the buttry has been locked up, and he has been forced to go to bed supperless." "How! supperless," cried she in a passion. "Why did not you tell me so before? Poor child, go to him presently; bring him hither to night; he shall not go home without his supper; I shall always have something got for him here."

"What is this!" said the gentleman-usher, making as if he was surpris'd at her discourse. "Heaven! Is it you, Madam, who talk after this rate? What a change is here? How long have you been so compassionate?" "How long!" replied she, very briskly; "ever since you came hither; or rather, ever since you schooled me for my ill nature, and reprov'd the rudeness of my manners. But alas!" with a languishing look, "I have gone from one extreme to another: from proud and insensible, I am become too soft and too tender. I love your young friend, Diego, and cannot help it. His absence, instead of weakening my passion, strengthens it." "Is it possible," answered the old squire, "that a young man, who is neither handsome nor well shaped, should be the object of so strong a passion? I should pardon your sentiments, if they had been inspired by some gentleman, a man of worth." "Ah Marcos," interrupted Margellina, "I am not like the rest of my sex; or else, with all your experience, you know not what to make of them. If I can tell any thing, they love without consideration. Love is a witchcraft of the mind, that directs one to an object, and fixes one to it, maugre all our resistance. It is a disease that seizes us like the madness of dogs, and other animals. Therefore don't tell me that Diego is unworthy of my passion. It is enough that I love him, to find in him a thousand qualities that you do not see, and perhaps he does not possess. It is in vain for you to represent

to me that his face and his shape are not worth my regard. To me he seems as fair as the day, and made on purpose to charm. Further, his voice has a sweetness that ravishes me; and he plays on the guitar with a grace peculiar to himself." "But, Madam," replied Marcos, do you consider his condition? that he is——;" "I consider nothing but him," interrupted she; "and if I were a woman of quality, I should not mind that."

The result of this conference was that the old usher finding he was not like to gain any thing by his arguments, gave over opposing his mistress's inclination; as a skilful pilot gives way to a tempest which drives him from the port whither he was bound. He did more to satisfy his patroness. He came to me, and taking me aside, told me what had passed between her and him. "You see, Diego," says he, "we cannot avoid continuing our concerts at Margellina's door. It must be so, friend; the lady must see you again, or she will do some foolish thing or other which will be more prejudicial to her reputation." I was not so cruel as to deny him. I replied, that I would come to her house in the evening with my guitar, and he might carry that welcome news to his mistress. He did so; and she was transported to hear it, waiting with impatience for the time appointed to see me, and listen to my music.

In the mean while an unlucky accident had like to have spoiled all. I could not go from my master's before night, which for my sins proved very dark. I gropped my way through the street, and had gone about half my journey, when a window opened, and I was saluted with a shower, which, I can assure you, was not of essence. I had all of it; and in those circumstances could not tell what to resolve on. If I returned home in that condition, I should be laughed at; and I could not think of going

to Margellina in so filthy and unfavoury a plight. However, I was so eager to renew my concert, that I got thither before I was aware of it, and found the old 'Squire waiting for me at the door. He told me Dr. Oloroso was gone to bed, and that we might divert ourselves very freely. I replied, "I must in the first place clean myself." I then informed him of the disgrace I had met with. He condoled with me, and carried me to a hall, where his mistress staid for us. As soon as she knew of my adventure, and saw how it was with me, she pitied me as much as if the greatest misfortune had befallen me. She afterwards fell a-raving at the person that had so served me. "Pray, Madam," says Marcos, "do not be in such a passion: it does not deserve it." "How!" replied she; should I not curse the wicked creature that has so treated this little lamb, this dove without gall, who does not so much as complain of the outrage that is done him? Ah! that I was a man, I would this minute revenge him."

Many other things she said, which shewed the excess of her love; nor were her actions less expressive of it than her words: for while Marcos was wiping me with a napkin, she ran to her chamber, and fetched a box of perfume; she burnt odoriferous drugs, and perfumed my cloaths. She afterwards sprinkled essences upon them abundantly. The fumigation and asperision being over, this charitable woman went herself to the kitchen for some bread, wine and roasted mutton, which she had ordered to be set aside for me. She made me eat, and took pleasure in helping me. Sometimes she would cut my meat, sometimes fill out my wine, whatever we could do to hinder her. When I had supped, the gentlemen of the concert prepared their guitars, and tuned their voices. We played a symphony, at which Margellina was charmed. Indeed we affected to sing some airs the words of which humoured

moured her passion ; and it must be remembered, that as I played, I now and then cast a soft look at her, which was fresh fuel to her flame, and I began to think it no disagreeable game. Though the concert lasted a good while, I was not tired with it. As for the lady who thought the hours were but moments, she would willingly have hearkened to us all night, if the old usher, who thought the moments were hours, had not often put her in mind that it grew late. She gave him the trouble to repeat it ten times to her : but she had to do with one that was indefatigable therein ; and would not let her be quiet, till I left the house. He was a man of prudence and discretion ; and seeing his mistress gave herself over to the pleasing her passion, he was afraid something ill might betide us, if he did not prevent it. This fear was but too well grounded ; the doctor either mistrusting some secret intrigue, or being possessed by that devil jealousy, who had spared him till then, censured our concerts ; and not long after forbade them, without telling his reasons for it, saying only, he would not have strangers entertained at his house. Marcos informed me of it ; and as it had respect to me in particular, I was very much mortified at it. I had conceived hopes which I was loath to lose.

But to relate things as becomes a faithful historian, I confess it to you, that I bore this misfortune with patience. It was not so with Margelina ; she could not bear it. “ Dear Marcos,” cried she to her usher, “ it is from you alone I look for assistance. Manage it so, I pray you, that I may see Diego in private.” “ What would you have of me ?” replied the old man in a fury ; I have already humoured you too much. I shall not contribute to the dishonour of my master, by satisfying your ardent desires ; nor will I sacrifice your reputation, and cover myself with infamy. I, whose conduct, as a faithful domestic, has always

been unblameable, I had rather quit your service than do so base an action." "Ah! Marcos," interrupted the lady, whom these last words frightened, "you kill me when you talk of leaving me. Cruel as you are; will you abandon me, after having brought me into this miserable condition? Restore to me my pride, and that savage temper which you took from me. Ah, that I had still those happy defects! I should now be at ease, whereas your indiscreet remonstrances have ravished from me the repose I once enjoyed. You have corrupted my manners by endeavouring to correct them. But ah!" continued she, weeping, "why do I blame you, why reproach you unjustly? No, no, father, you are not the author of my misfortune. It is my ill fate that prepares so much affliction for me. Do not take notice, I conjure you, of my extravagant discourse. My passion, alas! disorders my mind. Pity my weakness: all my consolation is in you; and if my life is dear to you, do not refuse me your assistance." Saying this, she wept afresh, and her tears choked her words. She pulled out her pocket handkerchief, and throwing it over her face, fell into a chair like a person overwhelmed with grief. Old Marcos, who perhaps knew the business of his post as well as any gentleman usher in Spain, could not stand out against so moving a spectacle. It touched him to the quick. He wept as well as his mistress, and said to her very tenderly, "Ah! Madam, you are enough to seduce any body. I cannot resist your afflictions. It overcomes my virtue; I promise you my succour; and do not wonder love has the power to make you forget your duty, since compassion only is capable of drawing me from mine. Thus this old usher, notwithstanding his unblameable conduct, devoted himself very obligingly to Margellina's passion. He came one morning to acquaint me with all this; and told

me when he left me, that he had already contrived a way to procure me a secret interview with the lady. This gave me new hopes. But two hours after I had other sort of news. An apothecary's man, one of our customers, entered our shop to be shaved. While I was setting my razor, he said, "Do you know Signior Diego, what is the matter with your friend the old gentleman usher Marcos d'Obregon, and why Dr. Oloroso has turned him away?" I replied, "No." "It is certainly true," answered he; "he was turned off just as I came hither. I learned it from Signior Oloroso himself, who came to our house, and discoursing with my master, told him, he had dismissed his old usher, being resolved to put his wife under the care of a faithful, severe, and vigilant duenna, desiring him to recommend him to one." "I understand you," said my master, interrupting him: "you would have such a one as Dame Melancia, who was governante to my wife, and who is still in my house, though I have been a widower these six weeks. I can ill spare her; but will part with her to you, in whose honour I have a particular interest; you may trust her with the guardianship of your forehead. She is the pink of duennas, and a dragon, where the chastity of the sex is concerned. During the twelve years that she lived, with my wife, who, as you know, wanted neither youth nor beauty, I never saw the shadow of a gallant in my house. And truly she had at first no very easy task of it. I must own the defunct had once a very great inclination to coquetry; but Dame Melancia reclaimed her, and instilled into her a love of virtue. In fine, this governante is a treasure, and you will thank me a thousand times for making a present of her to you." The doctor expressed himself to be mightily obliged to my master for this favour; and they two agreed that the

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duenna

duenna should this very day supply the place of the old usher.

This news gave a terrible disturbance to the ideas of pleasure which I began to entertain myself with ; and soon after Marcos came himself to confirm all that the apothecary's man had told me. " Dear Diego," says he, " I am overjoyed that Dr. Oloroso has turned me out of his house. How much trouble will it save me ? Besides discharging me from a base employment, what perplexity should I have been in to bring you and Margellina together ! Thank Heaven, I am delivered from that trouble, and the danger which attended it. On your part, you, my son, ought to comfort yourself for the loss of a few sweet moments, by considering the cares, anxieties, and pains that would have followed after." I hearkened to Marcos's lessons the more attentively, because I gave over all hopes of seeing Margellina again. I was not one of those obstinate lovers who are sharpened by obstacles ; and though I had been one of them, the character of Dame Melancia was enough to discourage me. However, as terrible a dragon as she had been represented to me, I found two or three days after, that the doctor's wife had thrown this Argos into a sleep, or corrupted her virtue ; for as I was going to shave one of my neighbours, a good old woman stopped me in the street, asking me if my name was not Diego de la Fuente ? I replied, " Yes." " Then you are the man I look for," answered she. " Come to-night to Donna Margellina's door ; and when you are there, make it known by some sign, and you shall be let into the house." " What sign ?" said I ; " that should be agreed upon beforehand. I can counterfeit a cat to the life : I will mew before the door several times." " It is enough," replied this agent of love. " I will tell her your answer. Your servant, Signior Diego. Heaven bless you : Ah what a kind creature

creature you are ! I wish I was but fifteen years old for your sake, I would not seek you for another." At these words the messenger of gallantry left me ; and you may well imagine that her message raised a furious storm in my mind. Farewell Marcos's morality. I waited for night impatiently : and when I thought Dr. Oloroso was abed, I went to his gate. I mewed several times, as a signal that I was come, and did it so cleverly, that it was without doubt an honour to the master who shewed me so fine an art. A moment afterwards Margellina came softly to the door, opened it herself, and shut it as soon as I was in the house. We went to the hall where our last concert was performed, and there was only the light of a small lamp in the chimney. We sat down close to each other for the convenience of discourse, and were both in a confusion ; a confusion, it is true, caused by the pleasure of our meeting ; but mine had also a mixture of fear. My princess in vain assured me that we had nothing to apprehend on account of her husband. I shook every joint of me ; and it was plain that was not at all the trembling of a lover. " Madam," said I, " how could you deceive the vigilance of your governante ? After what I have heard of Dame Melancia, I did not think it possible for me ever to hear from you, much less to see you again in private." Donna Margellina smiled at this discourse, and answered me, " You will not be surpris'd at this private meeting of ours, when I have told you what has passed between my duenna and me. When she entered this house, my husband caressed her in an extraordinary manner, telling me he gave me up to the conduct of that discreet lady, who was a sample of all the virtues, a looking glass that I was to have incessantly before my eyes, to learn discretion by her. He added, this admirable person governed an apothecary's wife, a friend of mine, twelve

years, and that in such a manner, that she made a perfect saint of her. This panegyric, which Dame Melancia's four looks confirmed, cost me many a tear, and flung me into despair. I imagined how I was to be lectured by her from morning to night, and reprimanded all day long. In a word, I expected to become the most miserable woman in the world; which made me not to matter how I treated a duenna, from whom I looked for no mercy: so I resolved to begin with her; and, as soon as we were alone, I said to her, "I doubt not you are preparing to make me suffer as much as you can from you: but I must tell you beforehand, I am not very patient. I shall, on my part, give you all the mortifications that lie in my power. I must be plain with you. I have in my breast a passion which all your remonstrance will never cure me of. So take your measures accordingly. Be as vigilant as you can, I must own I will do my utmost to be too hard for you." At these words the duenna altered her looks; and instead of a severe lecture, which I was in expectation of, she said with a smile, "I am charmed with your humour, and will be as frank as you; I find we were made for one another. Ah! fair lady, you know me ill, if you judge of me by what the doctor your spouse said of me, or by my austere aspect. I am far from being an enemy to pleasure. I never undertook to keep the glory of husbands, but in order to do service to their pretty wives. I have a long time learned to dissemble, and can say that I am doubly happy, since I at once enjoy the convenience of vice, and the reputation of virtue. Between you and me the world are all virtuous at this rate only; it cost too much to be entirely so. It is enough now a-days if one has the appearance of virtue. Let me be your guide," continued the governante. "We will make old Dr. Oloroso have as good an opinion of his wife and me, as the apothecary Signior

Signior Apuntador had of his and me. Poor Apuntador ! how many tricks have we played him ? His spouse was a lovely creature, so good-natured, rest the soul of her, I will vouch for her, she spent her youth finely. She had I do not know how many lovers whom I introduced into her house, without her husband's perceiving any thing of the matter. Therefore, pray, Madam, make a more favourable judgment of me, and be persuaded, that, whatever talent the old usher had, you will lose nothing by the change. Perhaps I may be more serviceable to you than he was."

" I leave you to imagine, Diego, whether I was pleased or no with the duenna's discovering herself to me so frankly. I thought her the most severe of women : but one knows not what to judge of our sex. Her sincerity made me put confidence in her. I embraced her with such transport, that she found I was overjoyed to have so complaisant a governante. I opened myself freely to her, and entreated her to contrive some way or other that we might have a private meeting ; and she has done it. She it was that employed the old woman who spoke to you this morning, and who was often an agent of hers and the apothecary's wife : but what is the best of all in this adventure," continued Margelina smiling, " is, that Melancia, upon my telling her what a sound sleeper my husband is, is this very moment abed with him, and supplying my place." " So much the worse, Madam," said I ; " I do not like the contrivance. Your husband may wake, and find out the deceit." " He will not perceive it," replied she hastily : Do not be in pain about that, nor let a groundless fear disturb the pleasure you ought to take in being with a young lady who wishes you so well." The doctor's wife observing that I could not help being afraid still, left nothing undone she could think of to put courage into me ; and she tried so many ways, that at
last

last love got the better of my fear, and I was ready to take hold of that opportunity; when all of a sudden, in the height of my joy and passion, we heard a terrible knocking at the door; which put the blind god to flight, with all his train of similes and sports. Margellina immediately hid me under a table in the hall. She put out the light; and, as had been agreed between her and her governante, in case such an accident happened, went straight to the door of her husband's chamber. In the mean time the knocking continued; the whole house rung with it. The doctor got up, and putting on his morning-gown, called Melancia. The duenna jumped out of bed, though the doctor, who thought it had been his wife, bade her lie still. Melancia ran to her mistress, who staid for her at the door; and the governante making as if she had met her coming out of the chamber, cried, "Pray, Madam, go to bed again, I will see who it is." Margellina undressed herself as fast as she could, and laid herself down by the doctor, who had not the least suspicion that he was imposed on. It was true, this scene was played in the dark by two actresses; one of them was an incomparable one, and the other had a great disposition to become so.

The duenna going to the gate with a light in her hand, opened it, and returned soon after to the doctor, saying, "Be pleased to rise, Sir; our neighbour Fernandez de Buendia the bookseller is fallen into an apoplectic fit. You are sent for, and desired to make what haste you can." The doctor put on his cloaths as fast as he could, and ran away to the bookseller's. His wife, attended by the duenna, came in her morning-gown to the hall, and drew me out from under the table more dead than alive. "Fear nothing, Diego," says Margellina: "Be of good courage." She then told me in a few words all that had passed; and would
fain

tain have renewed the conversation which the incident had broken off: but the governante would not let her. "Madam," said she, "your husband may come back in a moment; the bookseller may be dead. Besides," added she, seeing the fright I was in, "what can you make of this poor creature? He is not in a condition to come off as he should do. You had better send him home now, and let him come again to-morrow." Donna Margellina consented to do so, but with reluctance. She was always for the time present; and I believe she grieved heartily that she could not give her husband the new bonnet with which she designed to cap him. For my part, I was not so afflicted for the loss of love's dear favours, as I rejoiced for having escaped the danger I was in. I returned to my master's, and spent the rest of the night in thinking on my adventure, I was in suspense whether I should go again the next night. I was afraid still of some new disgrace; but the devil, who always puts one forward on the like occasions, represented to me, that I should be a blockhead now not to push my fortune. He filled my heart with ideas of Margellina's charms, and the joys that were promised me in the possession of them. This determined me to make another attempt; and I resolved to do it with a better heart than I had done before. In this good disposition I went to Margellina's door the night following, about eleven o'clock; it was very dark, not a star to be seen. I mewed twice or thrice, to give notice of my being there; and no body coming to me, I not only mewed again, but counterfeited all the different cries of a cat, which I learned of a shepherd at Olmedo. I performed my part so well, that a neighbour coming home, and taking me for one of those animals, took up a stone, and threw it at me with all his force, crying, "Curse on your squalling." The stone hit me on the head, and

stunned

stunned me with the blow. I found I was wounded; and that was enough to cure me of my gallantry. I lost my love with my blood, went home, and waked all the house. My master dressed my wound, which he took to be dangerous. However, it healed in three weeks time. I have not since heard of Margellina; and suppose Dame Melancia disengaged her from me, to provide her with a lover more for the duenna's interest. I do not much trouble myself about it; and soon after departed from Madrid, to continue the tour of Spain, which I intended to make.

CH A P. VIII.

How Gil Blas and his companion met a man soaking crusts of bread in a fountain; and the discourse they had together.

SIGNIOR Diego de la Fuente told me other adventures of his; but they are not worth repeating. I was however obliged to hear them, though they were all very long. He led us to Ponte de Duera; and we staid in that village the rest of the day, and supped on pease soup and a hare; the latter was not very young nor very fresh. As soon as it was light the next day we set out, having stored ourselves with pretty good wine and bread, taking with us also half of the hare which we left over night.

When we had travelled six miles, our stomachs began to come; and observing there was a just of trees about an hundred yards off the high road, we went thither to sit down under the shade. We met there a man of eight and twenty years of age, who was soaking some crusts of bread in a fountain. He had by him a long rapier, and a knapsack, which he carried at his back. We saluted him civilly, and he did the same by us. He then offered us some of his crusts, demanding with a smile,
 "Whether

"Whether we would do as he did?" We said with all our hearts, on condition he would permit us to join our fare with his, and accept of part of it. He agreed to it, and we produced what we had, and the stranger was very well pleased with it. "So, Gentlemen," cries he, "I perceive you are well provided: you are men of good forecast. I have not the precaution that you have. I trust to chance: nevertheless, as it is with me, I must tell you without vanity, that I sometimes make a shining figure. I am often treated like a prince, and have guards attending me." "I understand you," says Diego; "you would let us know that you are a player." "You guess right," replied the other; "I have been a player ever since I was fifteen years old. I could act several parts when I was a child." "I must be plain with you," cried the barber, shaking his head. "I can hardly believe you; I know the players too well for it. Those gentlemen don't use to travel like you on foot, nor feed on bread and water. I am afraid you rather snuff the candles." "Think of me what you please," replied the actor, "I have acted several top parts, especially love ones." "If that is true," says my comrade, "I felicitate you upon it; and Signior Gil Blas and myself rejoice that we have the honour to breakfast with a person of so great importance." Saying this, we fell to, all three of us, and soon picked the bones of the remains of the hare. We emptied our flask with so much dispatch that we had not time to speak; but after we had done eating and drinking, we renewed the conversation. "I am surprised," said the barber to the player, "that matters are no better with you. Your appearance is much too mean for a hero of the stage. Pardon me, if I speak so freely to you." "So freely!" cried the actor, "don't you know Melchior Zapata? I thank my stars I am not testy. I love that every body should be free

free with me, as I am with every body. I confess I am not rich; you see my coat here shews my profession, and so will all the rest of my wardrobe. He then opened his knapsack, and pulled out some tinsel ornaments, a dirty plume of feathers, and some red buskins. "This is my equipage, Gentlemen," continued he: "and in truth it is not so good as a man could wish for." "I wonder at it," replied Diego, "sure you have no wife nor daughter." "Yes, I have a young wife, and a handsome one," replied Zapata: but my damned luck would have it, that she must prove virtuous, forsooth. I married her in hopes she would not let me starve; but such is my ill fates that she stands upon her reputation. It is very hard that among all the strollers there should be but one honest woman, and she should fall to my share." "It is indeed very hard," says the barber. "Why did you not marry one of the company at Madrid? You could not have failed there." "That is right," replied the actor; "but we strollers must not pretend to such heroines as town-actresses. An actor of the king's own company can aspire to no more than that. If one would take a wife in the city, one might be furnished as well out of the playhouse as in it." "Did you never try," says my companion, "to get into the king's company? Must a man have infinite merit to be admitted amongst them?" "Infinite merit!" replied Melchior; "there are twenty of them, inquire into their characters, you will find above half of them are fit for nothing but to hug a brown musket; yet, for all that, it is no easy matter to get to be one of them. It must be done either by money or friends, and then whatever a man's merit is, he shall be admitted. I ought to know it; for I have been hooted and hissed like a devil, though I deserved to be clapped for my performances. I tore my lungs, and imitated the most popular actors of the stage: but nothing

thing would do. The town would not bear in me, what they clapped in others; such is the power of prejudice. Thus, finding I did not take, and having nothing to make my way for me, in spite of those that hissed me, I am returning to Zamora to my wife and my companions, who have not met with very good luck there neither. I wish we may not be obliged to beg our way to the next town. If we do, it will not be the first time." Saying this, the stage-emperor rose up, threw his knapsack over his shoulder, put on his sword, and, with a grave air, cried, "May the Heavens, Gentlemen, shower their favours upon your heads." Diego replied in the same tone, "May you find your wife at Zamora another woman, and in a better temper to keep you from starving." As soon as Signior Zapata had turned his back upon us, he fell to his declamations and gesticulations. The barber and I hissed him, to teach him more discretion. He thought he heard still the hisses at Madrid, looked back; and finding it was we only, who made ourselves merry at his expense, instead of being offended at it, he took it in good part, and went away laughing aloud, as little reason as he had for it. We also returned to the high road, and proceeded on our journey.

C H A P. IX.

In what condition Diego found his family; and how merry Gil Blas and he made themselves before they separated.

WE lay the next night in a little village, whose name I have forgot, between Moyadas and Valpuesta, and came the next day about eleven o'clock to the plain of Olmedo. "Signior Gil Blas," says my companion, "this is the place where I was born, and I am transported at the sight of it;" so natural it is for men to love their country. "Signior

nior Diego," answered I, " a man who loves his country so well as you seem to do, should methinks not have talked so freely of it as you have done. Olmedo appears to me to be a city, and you represented it only as a village. It must be a great town, if it is not a city." " I beg Olmedo's pardon," replied the barber; " but I must tell you, that after having seen Madrid, Toledo, Saragossa, and other great cities, which I have done in my travels in Spain, I look upon little ones as villages." As we drew nearer to Olmedo, we perceived a great number of people were gathered together; and, when we came up to them, found three tents set up at a distance from each other, in which were cooks and butlers making ready for a feast. Some were preparing boiled meat and roast meat; others pyes and fricassees; others filling bottles; others washing glasses. What I took most particular notice of, was a great stage built in the middle of the place, adorned with painted paper, on which were several mottoes in Greek and Latin. The barber no sooner spied the inscriptions, than he cried, " The Greek there smells very much of my uncle Thomas. I will lay a wager it is his doing: for, between you and me, he is a person of great ability. He can say an infinite number of college-books by heart. The worst of it is, he is ever repeating them in all companies, which every one is not pleased with. My uncle has more than this, translated the Latin poets, and Greek authors. He is master of antiquity, as may be seen by the fine remarks he has made. If it had not been for him, we should not have known that in the city of Athens children cried when they were whipped. We owe that discovery to his profound erudition.

When my comrade and I had made our observations on what we had seen, we were curious to know for what were such preparations. We were about inquiring, when Diego spied his uncle, Sig-

nior

nior Thomas de la Fuente, who it seems had the ordering of the feast. We ran up to him; but the school-master did not at first know his nephew Diego, so much was he altered in ten years time. But, finding at last it was the same, he embraced him very affectionately, and cried, "Ah, my dear nephew! art thou come once more to the place of thy nativity? Wilt thou again revisit thy household gods? And art thou restored safe and sound to thy family? Oh, thrice and four times happy day! a day worthy a place among the red lettered in the calendar. I have abundance of news, friend, to tell thee. Thy uncle Pedro, the wit, is become the victim of Pluto. He died three months ago. The miser in his lifetime was ever afraid that he should want necessaries. He had great pensions from several grandees, and yet he spent but ten pistoles a-year for his maintenance. He had a valet, but he starved him as well as himself. He was more mad than the Greek Aristippus, who ordered his slaves to throw away his riches in the desert of Libya, as things that were incumbrances. Thy uncle was continually heaping up gold and silver. For whom? For heirs he would never look upon. He died worth thirty thousand ducats, which thy father, thy uncle Bertrand, and I, have divided among us. We can now provide for our children. My brother Nicholas has already disposed of thy sister Theresa. She is newly married to one of our alcaldes. *Con-nubio junxit stabili, propriamque dicavit.* It is for her wedding that this festival is going to be kept. It is we that have set up these tents here for the three heirs of Pedro; each of us has one, and each pays the expense of a day. I wish thou hadst come sooner, to have seen the beginning of our rejoicings. The day before yesterday, which was that of the wedding, thy father was at the expense: he gave a noble entertainment, and the company ran at the ring afterwards. Yesterday the mercer bore the charge,

charge, and diverted us with a pastoral comedy. He dressed up ten handsome boys and girls like shepherds and shepherdeses. He used all the points and ribands in his shop to equip them. They danced and sung most part of the day: but though they performed their parts very dexterously, yet the people were not very much taken with it. I find pastorals are out of doors.

This day's expense is to be mine; and I have provided a show of my own invention, to entertain the townsmen of Olmedo. *Finis coronat opus.* I have caused a stage to be raised, upon which, God willing, my disciples shall represent a piece composed by myself, entitled, *The Amusements of Mulcy Bugen-tuf King of Morocco.* It will be extremely well played; for my scholars pronounce as well as the actors of Madrid. They are youths of Pennasick and Segovia, who board at my house. Excellent actors! Indeed I have taken some pains with them: what they say, will be done masterly, *ut ita dicam.* As to the piece itself, I shall say nothing. I will have the pleasure of the surprise. All I shall observe to thee on that head, is, that it will transport the spectators. It is one of those tragical subjects that move the soul by images of death: for I am of the same opinion with Aristotle, that poets should excite terrour. Well if I had wrote for the stage, I would have brought nothing on it but bloody princes and murdering heroes. I would have bathed myself in blood. I would not only have killed the principal persons in my plays, but even the guards themselves. I would have cut the throat of the candle-snuffer. In fine, I love the *Terrible.* It is my *gout.* Those kinds of poems always take. They bring many to the house, and get the authors fame."

While he was speaking, we spied a great croud of people coming out of the town. They were the new-married couple, attended by their relations and friends. Twelve fiddlers went before, and made a horrid

horrid noise with their discord. We met them; and Diego discovered himself to the company, who shouted for joy. Every body was eager to accost him. He had something to do to receive all their civilities in a civil manner. All his relations and all that were present embraced him. After which his father said, "Thou art welcome, Diego; thou findest thy parents somewhat better in the world than when thou leftst them. I shall explain myself farther another time." Then the company proceeded into the plain, entered the tents, and sat down at the tables which were prepared for them. I did not leave my companion. We both dined with the bridegroom and bride, who seemed to be well-matched. Dinner held a long while, because the schoolmaster had the vanity to order three courses to be served up, that he might outdo his brethren, who had not come off so magnificently. After dinner all the guests expressed a great impatience to see Signior Thomas's piece represented, not doubting, said they, but the production of so fine a genius must be well worth hearing. We drew near the theatre, where all the fiddlers sat in a readiness to play between the acts. Every one was silent in expectation of the opening the play. At last the actors appeared on the stage; as did also the author, with the poem in his hand. He had reason to say the piece was tragical; for in the first act the King of Morocco, by way of recreation, kills a hundred Moorish slaves, shooting at them with his bow and arrows. In the second he cuts off the heads of thirty Portuguese officers, whom one of his captains had made prisoners of war. And in the third, this monarch, weary of his wives, sets fire to the palace wherein they were lodged, and reduced both it and them to ashes. The Moorish slaves and the Portuguese officers were figures made of reed very artfully; and the palace was composed of paper, which, when it was set a-fire, there were a thousand doleful

ful cries that seemed to issue from amidst the flames. This finished the piece: and all the field rang with the applauses which so fine a tragedy met with. This justified the good taste of the poet; and shewed that he knew how to make a good choice of his subjects.

I thought there was nothing more to be seen, if the *Amusements of Muley Bugentuf* were over; but I was mistaken. There were prizes to be distributed. For Thomas, to render the entertainment the more solemn, had caused some of his scholars to make exercises, which they were to read to the auditory that had heard the play; and those that did best were to have books given them, which he had purchased with his own money at Segovia.

Two benches were therefore brought on the stage, and a case of books very neatly bound. All that were to perform came up to Signior Thomas, who stood as stiffly as the president of a college. He had a paper in his hand, wherein were written the names of those that were to carry off the prizes. He gave the first to the King of Morocco, who read his part with a loud voice. Each scholar, as he was named, went respectfully to receive a book of the pedant. He then was crowned with laurel, and made to sit down on one of the two benches, exposed to the view of the admiring spectators. As desirous as the schoolmaster was to send away all the company contented, he could not accomplish it. For, having distributed all the prizes among certain youths whose parents paid him best, the mothers of some of the neglected scholars took fire, and accused the pedant of partiality. Thus this feast, which had till then done him so much honour, was like to end like that of the Lapithæ.

B O O K III.

C H A P. I.

Of Gil Blas's arrival at Madrid, and the first master he served in that city.

I STAID some time with the young barber; and, hearing there was a merchant in Olmedo, who was going to Segovia from Valladolid with four light mules, I got into his acquaintance, and rode one of them to Segovia, where he invited me to his house, and kept me there two days, so far was I got into his good graces. When he found I was about to depart for Madrid by the muleteer, he gave me a letter in charge, desiring me to deliver it with my own hand, as it was directed. I took it, not knowing it was a letter of recommendation. However, I carried it to Signior Mattheo Melendez a linen-draper at Madrid; who had no sooner read the contents of it, but he said very obligingly to me, "Signior Gil Blas, Pedro Palatio my correspondent writes to me in your favour so pressingly, that I must beg of you to take a lodging at my house. He has also desired me to help you to a good place, which I shall with pleasure endeavour to do, not doubting of succeeding in it to your content."

I accepted of Melendez's offer with the more joy, for that my finances grew daily less and less. I was not however a burthen to him long. When I had been with him eight days, he told me he had just been recommending me to a gentleman of his acquaintance, who wanted a valet de chambre, and he believed he would take me. The gentleman came himself soon after. "Signior," says Melendez, pointing to me, "you see there the young man I spoke to you about. He is a sober lad, and I will answer for his honesty." The gentleman looked fixedly upon me, and said my physiognomy pleased

pleased him, and that he would hire me for his servant. "Come along with me," continued he, "I will shew you what you must do." So, bidding the merchant good-morrow, he led me to the broad street near St. Philip's church. We went into a pretty good house, of which he took up one wing. We mounted a stair case of six steps, and came to a room which had two doors, one within another; the first had a little lattice window. Through that room we passed into another, where was a bed and other furniture, rather neat than rich.

As my new master had made his observations of me at Melendez's, so did I also in my turn examine him with a great deal of attention. He was above fifty years old; had a grave, reserved look, but withal there was good nature in it; and his temper answered his aspect. He asked me several questions about my family. And my account of myself giving him satisfaction; "Gil Blas," says he, "I take thee to be a sensible youth, and am glad I have met with thee; thou shalt thyself have no reason to be sorry. I will allow thee six reals a-day for thy wages and board, beside the valets thou wilt have in my service. It is no hard matter to please me. I do not eat at home. All thou wilt have to do is, to brush my cloaths in the morning, to dress me, and the rest of the day is thy own; only take care to be at home early in the evening, and stay for me at my door, I require no more of thee." Having thus told me my business, he took six reals out of his pocket, and gave me for the use before-mentioned; after which we went out of the house again. He locked the doors and took the keys with him. "Friend," said he, "do not follow me. Go whither thou wilt; but let me find thee on the stairs when I come home at night." Saying this he left me to spend the rest of the day as I thought fit.

"Thou hast got a rare master, Gil Blas," said

I to myself. "Six reals a day for brushing his cloaths, and dressing him a-mornings, the rest of thy time all thy own! This is the easiest place sure that ever man had. No wonder I was so desirous to see Madrid. My good genius put me upon it. I cannot be happier in my circumstances." I walked up and down the city all day, looking upon every thing that was new to me, and that was not a little. In the evening I supped at an eating-house in our neighbourhood; and then went to the place where my master ordered me to wait for him. He came three quarters of an hour after me, and seemed well pleased to find me so punctual. "It is very well," says he; "I love that servants should be exact to a minute." At these words he opened the doors of his apartment, and afterwards locked them upon us. It being dark, he took a tinderbox, struck a light, and lighted a candle. I then helped to undress him. When he was abed, I put a candle in his chimney, as he bade me, and took the other with me into the ante-chamber, where I lay in a bed without curtains. He rose the next day between nine and ten. I brushed his cloaths. He gave me six reals, and dismissed me till night. When he went out, I observed that he took great care to fasten his doors. We saw one another no more till night; such was our way of living, which I thought was very pleasant. But the pleasanter of it all was, that I did not know my master's name. Melendez knew it not himself, he having no more knowledge of him, than that he used to come to his shop, and buy linen of him. Our neighbours could not satisfy my curiosity any better. They all told me my master was a stranger to them, though he had lived in those lodgings two years; that he kept company with nobody thereabouts: and some of them, who were apt to judge too rashly, concluded thence, that he was not so good as he should be. They went

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farther afterwards, and suspected him to be a spy for the king of Portugal, bidding me take care of myself. I was mightily troubled at what they said, for fear, if it should happen to be true, I might perhaps visit some of the dungeons in Madrid. As innocent as I was, I could not help being afraid. My past misfortunes rendered the magistracy terrible to me. I had twice had experience, that, if it did not murder the innocent, it had at least no regard to the laws of hospitality; and that it was always a sad thing to fall into its hands. I consulted Melendez on so nice an occasion. He could not tell what to advise me. Though he did not think my master was a spy, yet he knew not what else to make of him. I resolved to observe him, and to leave him, if I found him an enemy to the state. But I thought to myself, I lived so easily, that I ought to be very sure of it. To this end I examined strictly all his actions; and, to sift him, said one night, as I was undressing him, "I know not, Sir, how a man can live so as to avoid evil tongues. It is a vile world; and some of our neighbours are as bad as any in it; they deal altogether in scandal. You cannot imagine how they talk of you." "Well, Gil Blas," replied he, "and what can they say of me?" "Malice," answered I, "never wants matter. Virtue itself is often turned to its purpose. Our neighbours say we are dangerous people; that the court ought to have an eye upon us. In a word, you pass, Sir, for the king of Portugal's spy." Saying this, I looked on my master as Alexander did on his physician, and made use of all my penetration to see whether I could discover any thing. I fancied I perceived some alteration in my patron, which agreed well enough with the conjectures of our neighbours. He appeared very pensive; but, presently recovering himself, he said, with a great deal of composure, "Gil Blas, do not mind what our neighbours say; it is not worth our troubling ourselves

ourselves about it. Let them think as ill as they please of us, as long as we give them no occasion for it."

He said no more, but went to bed; and I did the same, not knowing what judgment to make of him. The next day, as we were preparing to go out, we heard a great knocking at the door. My master opened the innermost, and looking through the lattice, he saw a man well dressed, who accosted him thus, "Signior, I am the alguazil, and am come to tell you that Monsieur the corregidor desires to speak with you." "What would he have with me?" replied my patron. The alguazil answered, "I do not know that; you will soon be informed of it." "I am his humble servant," replied my master; "I have no business with him." Saying this, he clapped the door upon him very hastily, as if he did not much like what the alguazil said. He gave me my six reals, bidding me go, he would stay within that morning and had no further occasion of me. This made me judge that he was afraid of being apprehended, and to avoid it kept at home. I left him; and to satisfy myself in the matter, hid myself in a place where I could see him when he went out. I was resolved not to stir till I saw what would come of it; and about an hour after I observed him to come out with an air of assurance, which confounded my suspicions, but did not cure me of them; for I had no very good opinion of him. I imagined that his looks were artificial; that he staid behind to carry off his gold and jewels, and perhaps was going to save himself by sudden flight. I despaired of seeing him again, and was in doubt whether I should wait for him at night; but I altered my mind, and went to my post at the usual hour. I was very much surpris'd to see him return. He went to bed without shewing the least concern, and rose the next day with the same composure of mind.

While he was dressing himself, we heard a knocking at our door, as it was the day before. My master looked through the lattice, He perceived the alguazil was there again, and demanded what he would have? "Open the door," replied the alguazil; "it is Monsieur the corregidor." At so awful a name my blood chilled in my veins. I was devilishly afraid of those gentlemen ever since I had fallen into their hands, and would gladly have been a hundred leagues off Madrid. As for my patron, he was not so frightened. He opened the door, and received the judge with respect. "You see," says the corregidor, "I am not come with a train after me. I would do what is to be done without making a noise. As ill a character as you have in this city, I think there is so much due to you, as you appear like a gentleman. Pray what is your name, Sir? and what business brought you to Madrid?" "My Lord," replied my master, "I am a native of New Castile, and my name is *Don Bernard de Castel Blazo*. As to my business here, I walk about to see plays, and divert myself daily with some pleasant companions." "You have, doubtless," says the judge, a great income." "No, my Lord," answered my patron, "I have no income at all, nor lands, nor houses." "How do you live then?" replied the corregidor. "I will shew you," says my master. At these words he lifted up the hangings, opened a door that I had not observed before, and after that another within it, which led to a closet, where was a great chest full of pieces of gold, he desired the judge to satisfy himself, and went on in this manner.

"You know, my Lord, that the Spaniards do not love labour: and of all the Spaniards in the world, I believe I love it least. I am so lazy, that I cannot bear any employment. If I would turn my vices into virtues, I might
call

call that laziness a philosophical indolence: that it was the effect of a mind taken off from the things which are most desired by men. But I must own that I am lazy by my complexion, and so lazy, that if I were to work for my living, I should starve. That I might live according to my humour, and save the trouble of a steward, I turned all my estate, which consisted of several considerable inheritances, into money. That money is in this chest, above fifty thousand ducats; which is more than I shall want, if I live to an hundred years old, being now near threescore. And I spend but a thousand a-year. I am not solicitous for the future, because, thank my stars, I am no ways addicted to the three things that commonly ruin men. I do not love feasting nor gaming, and have done with women. I am not one of those old coxcombs that dote on the sex when the season is past, and shall never be at any charge to purchase their favours,"

"You are a happy man," says the corregidor. "They injured you who took you to be a spy. A man of your temper is by no means for it. Live on in your way, Don Bernard," added he; "instead of giving you any disturbance. I will hereafter be your defender, and desire your friendship, and I offer you mine." "My Lord," cried my master, "I accept with joy and respect so obliging an offer. By giving me your friendship, you add to my wealth, and make my happiness complete." The alguazil and I heard this conversation in the next room. Don Bernard could hardly tell how to return the extraordinary civilities of the corregidor: and my master's example put me upon exerting myself to do honour to the alguazil. I made him a hundred low bows; though, at the bottom, I had that contempt and aversion for him, which every honest man has naturally for an alguazil.

CHAP. II.

The surprise Gil Blas was in to meet Captain Rolando at Madrid: and several curious things related to him by that robber.

DON Bernard de Castel Blazo having waited upon the corregidor to the street, returned immediately to see that his chest was fast, and his doors well locked. We then went out both of us much better satisfied than we were before, Don Bernard having the corregidor to his friend, and I being secure of my six reals a-day. I resolved to go and tell this adventure to Melendez; and as I drew near his house, I spied Captain Rolando. I was in a dreadful surprise, and could not help trembling at sight of him. He knew me again, came up to me very gravely, and keeping still his air of superiority, ordered me to follow him. I shook all the while, and obeyed him in my fright, "He will pay me my old reckoning," said I to myself, "whither will he carry me? perhaps there is some subterranean habitation in this city also. 'Egad, if I thought so, I would let him see that I have not the gout in my toes." I walked behind him, observing narrowly at what place he stopped, resolving to run for it, if I did not like it.

Rolando rid me of my fears, by entering a famous tavern. I followed him. He called for the best wine, and bid the landlord get dinner. While dinner was preparing, Captain Rolando began his discourse to me, thus; "Thou mayst well wonder Gil Blas, to see thy old commander here; and thy wonder will be increased, when thou hearest what I am going to tell thee. The day I left thee in our subterranean dwelling, while I and my companions went to Mansilla to sell the mules and the horses we took the day before, we met the corregidor of
Leon's

Leon's son in his coach, attended by four men on horseback, well armed. We killed two of them, and the other two fled. The coachman, afraid of his master's life, cried, " Ah, Signiors, for God's sake do not murder the only son of the corregidor of Leon." These words, instead of gaining the pity of my cavaliers, enraged them against the son of the corregidor. " Don't let the son of a mortal enemy of our fellows escape us," said one of my companions. " How many of our profession has he slaughtered? Let us be revenged, and offer this victim to their manes." The rest of my cavaliers approved of his speech; and my lieutenant was preparing to act the part of the high-priest in this sacrifice; when I held him by the arm, and cried, " Hold, why will you spill blood without necessity? Let us be content with this young man's purse, since he does not resist. It would be barbarous to cut his throat. Besides, he is not accountable for his father's actions; and his father does but his duty when he condemns us to death, as we do ours, when we ease travellers of their burdens."

I interceded thus for the corregidor's son; and my intercession was not ineffectual: we only took all the money he had, and carried off with us the horses of the two dead men, which we sold with the rest at Mansilla. We returned afterwards to our subterranean habitation, where we arrived next day a little before light. We were very much surprised to find the trap door lifted up; and that surprise of ours was still greater, when we found Leonarda tied to the table. She told us what had passed in two words. We admired how thou couldst deceive us. We did not think thee capable of playing us such a trick; and we forgave thee, for the contrivance. As for us, as soon as we had untied our cook, I ordered her to get us something good for to eat; and took my comrades

with me to see our horses well looked after. The old negro, who had nothing given him in four and twenty hours, was almost in the agony of death. We would fain have saved him ; but he was too far gone, and appeared so near his end, that we left the poor dog as we found him. We ourselves went to breakfast ; and having satisfied our craving appetites, slept away the rest of that day. When we awoke, we heard from Leonarda that Domingo had breathed his last. So we carried him into the vault, where thou mayest remember thou usedst to lie, and buried him as formally as if he had had the honour to have been one of our companions.

Four or five days after, as we were scouring the road, we met three troops of St. Hermandad's officers at the entrance of a wood. We spied no more than one troop at first, and despised them, though superior in number to us. We attacked them ; and while we were engaged, the two other troops that had not yet come in play, bore down upon us so warmly, that our valour was of no use to us. Our lieutenant and two of our cavaliers were killed on this occasion. Myself and two more, which were all our company, were surrounded and taken. Two of the troops of St. Hermandad conducted us to Leon : The third went to destroy our retreat, which was found out in this manner. A peasant of Luceno crossing the forest in his way home, by chance perceived our trap-door lifted up, the same day thou carriest away the lady. He suspected that it was our dwelling : and not having the courage to enter, he contented himself to observe the place, and make those remarks by which he might find it again. He cut the bark off some of the neighbouring trees in several places, and notched others all the way from one space to another, till he was out of the wood. He then went to Leon to give information of it to the corregidor, who was the
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more pleased with it, because his son had been lately robbed by our company. He presently got together those three troops of St. Hermidad's officers to apprehend us, and the peasant was their guide.

I was a show for the citizens of León, on my arrival in that city. Had I been a Portuguese general, brought thither prisoner of war, the people could not have flocked about me more. "Behold the famous captain!" cried they, "the terror of the country; he deserves to be torn in pieces by horses; and so do his companions." We were brought before the corregidor, who began to insult me. "Heaven, tired out with the disorders of thy life," says he, "has given such a rogue at last into my hands. "My Lord," replied I, "if I have been guilty of crimes, you cannot at least reproach me with the death of your son. I saved his life: you should consider me a little for that." "Sirrah," cried he, "it is not by such rascals as thou art, that men of honour are obliged to act generously. But if I had a mind to save thee, the duty of my office will not let me." Having said this, he ordered us to be shut up in a dungeon, where my companions did not long languish; for at three days end they were taken out to act a tragical part in the market place. As for me, I remained in the dungeon three weeks, imagining that my execution was deferred to render it the more terrible; and I expected a new sort of death: but the corregidor then sending for me, said, "Hear thy sentence. Thou art discharged. Had it not been for thee, my only son had been murdered on the highway. As I am his father, I cannot in gratitude forget that piece of service: and as I am a judge, not having it in my power to pardon thee, I wrote to court in thy favour. I have procured a pardon for thee, and thou mayst go where thou plearest: but have a care how thou offendest again. Let this happy event instruct thee to leave off thy

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wicked course of life." What he said made an impression upon me, and I departed from Madrid, with a resolution to follow his advice, and live peaceably in that city. I found my father and mother dead. Their estate was in the possession of an old relation, who gave me such a kind of account of it as trustees generally do. I had no more than three thousand ducats, which perhaps was not a fourth part of what belonged to me. But what should I do in that case? I would have got nothing by a law suit. So I took it, and to avoid idleness, bought an alguazil's place. My brethren would, out of decency, have opposed my admission, had they known my history. But by good luck they either knew it not, or made as if they did not, which is all one. Indeed, in this honourable society it behoves every body to hide his actions as well as he can. Heaven be praised, we have nothing to say against one another on that score: the devil take the best. Nevertheless, friend," continues Rolando, "to speak my whole mind to thee, I do not at all like my profession. It requires too much tricking and cunning for me. Here one can only commit private and subtle rogueries. My first trade was more to my gout. My new one is safer, it is true; but the former is more pleasant, and I love liberty. I am disposed to sell my place, and to take the mountains at the source of the Tagus. I know there is a retreat there inhabited by a band of Catalans, the bravest fellows in the kingdom. If thou wilt go with me, we will add to the company. I shall be captain's second; and that they may make no objection to thee, I will assure them that I saw thee fight twice by my side. I will wonderfully extol thy valour. I will praise thee more than a general does an officer whom he would have advanced. I will take no notice of the trick thou didst put upon us, lest they should suspect thee. They shall know nothing of that. Well, what

what sayest thou? Wilt thou follow me? I wait for thy answer." "Every one has his particular inclinations," replied I: "you are made for hardy enterprises, and I for a quiet easy life." "I understand you," said he: "the lady you took from us has still the possession of your heart, and no doubt you live an easy life with her at Madrid. Confess, Monsieur Gil Blas, that you have her with you here; and live together on the pistoles you carried off from our under-ground dwelling." I told him he was in an error; and while we were at dinner, related to him the story of that lady, and all that had happened to me since I left the band. When we had dined, he revived his discourse of the Catalans. He owned that he resolved to join them, and again tempted me to go with him: but perceiving that I declined it, he gave me a stern look, and said very gravely, "Since thy soul is so base as to prefer thy slavish condition to the honour of being admitted into a company of brave men, I abandon thee to the poverty of thy spirit. But hearken to what I say to thee, and keep it always in memory. Forget what thou hast heard from me to-day. Mention me to nobody. If I hear thou dost so much as name me in conversation—Thou knowest me, and that is enough." At these words he called for the reckoning, paid it, and we went our way.

C H A P. III.

He is dismissed the service of Don Bernard de Castel Blazo, and enters into that of a beau.

AS we were going out of the tavern, and taking leave of one another, my matter passed by. He saw me, and I observed that he more than once cast his eye upon the captain. I imagined he was surprised to see me with such a sort of a man; for the very looks of him were enough to let one
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into his character. He was tall, hard visaged ; and though he was not ugly, yet he had something in his face that was shocking, and had the air of a rogue.

I was not out in my conjectures. I found at night that Don Bernard's head was full of the captain, and that he was well disposed to believe every thing I knew of him, if I durst tell him. " Gil Blas," says he, " what tall fellow was it that I met with you ?" " An alguazil, Sir," replied I ; thinking that would have been sufficient to satisfy him. But he asked me several other questions about him ; and observing that I was in some confusion, occasioned by Rolando's threats, which were fresh in my memory, he said no more, but went to bed. Next morning, when I had dressed him as usual, he gave me six ducats instead of six reals, saying, " There, friend, I give thee that for this day's service. Go, find out another master. I will not entertain a valet that has got such an acquaintance." I answered in my justification, that I knew this alguazil, by having prescribed him physic, when I practised it at Valladolid. " Very well," replied my master, " your excuse is very fine ; but you should have made it last night. " I was cautious of doing it then," said I, " for fear you should have been offended at it ; and that was the cause of my confusion." " Yes, yes," replied my patron, " you were very cautious. I did not think you had been so cunning," continued he, clapping me gently on the shoulder, " Go, child, I dismiss you."

I went immediately to inform Melendez of this bad news. He heard me out, and said, " Don't trouble thyself ; I will help thee to a better place." And accordingly a few days after he informed me that he had got the best master in Madrid for me. " Gil Blas," cried he, " thou little thinkest thou art going to be so happy as I shall make thee. I have

have recommended thee to Don Matthias de Silva, a man of the first quality, one of those young lords who go under the denomination of *beaux*. I have the honour to be his draper and mercer. He buys silks and linen of me upon tick, it is true; but we seldom lose by these gentlemen in the end. They marry rich heiresses or widows, who pay their debts for them; and if they do not, we charge their goods at such rates, that if we have one part in four, we come off pretty well. Don Matthias's steward is my particular friend. We will go to him: he will present you to his master; and you may depend upon it, he will use you well, upon my account."

As we were going to Don Matthias's palace, the draper said to me, "Methinks it is very necessary that you should know the character of the steward. His name is *Gregorio Rodriguez*. He was not worth a groat, between you and me, when he first came into business; but finding he had a genius for it, he pursued it, and has got a good estate out of two round families, in which he served as steward. I must tell you he is very vain, and would have the other domestics cringe to him. They must all apply themselves to him, if they want any favour of their master. For if they should obtain it without his participation, he will always contrive some way or other to hinder its taking effect. Do you govern yourself, Gil Blas, by this rule therefore, and never fail to make your court to him, even more than to his master. Try all ways of getting into his good graces. His friendship will be of great use to you. He will pay you your wages punctually, and do something more for you. If you please him, he may now and then give you a little bone to pick, while himself secures the great ones. He does what he will. Don Matthias minds nothing but his pleasures, he never looks into his affairs. Is not that a rare house for a steward?"

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When we came to the palace, we asked for Signior Rodriguez, and were told we should find him in his apartment. He was there, and with him a kind of peasant, with a blue bag full of pistoles. The steward, who appeared to be of a more fallow complexion than a girl worn out with celibacy, met Melendez with open arms. The draper opened his in like manner, and they embraced both with demonstrations of friendship, in which there was at least as much art as nature. Their salutations over, they talked of me. Rodriguez having examined me from head to foot, said very civilly, I was exactly such a one as Don Matthias wanted, and that he would gladly undertake to present me to him. Upon this, Melendez let him know what a kindness he had for me; praying the steward to take me into his protection. After which he left us together: and as soon as he was gone, says Rodriguez, "I will introduce you to my master, when I have dispatched this countryman;" of whom he took the blue bag, saying, "Let us see, Talego, whether the money be right." He told out 500 pistoles, and cried, "It is very well, the sum is exact." Upon which he gave the countryman an acquittance, and sent him away. The pistoles he put into the bag again. Then addressing himself to me, said, "Now we will go to my master's levee. He generally rises about noon. It is an hour past, and I suppose he is got up." As the steward said, we found him in his morning-gown, lolling in an elbow-chair, his leg over one arm of it, and his head over the other, and his nose full of snuff. He was discoursing with a footman, who supplied the place of a valet. "My Lord," says the intendant, "I take the liberty to present a young man to you in the room of him you turned off the day before yesterday. Melendez your draper will answer for him. He assures me the lad has merit; and I believe you will be satisfied with him."

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"It is enough," replied the young Lord, "that you bring him to me. I take him into my service. He shall be my valet de chambre. That business is done, Rodriguez," added he. "I have something else to say to you. You are come very *a propos*. I was going to send for you. I have bad news to tell you, dear Rodriguez, I had ill-luck last night. Besides the hundred pistoles I had of you, I lost two hundred upon honour. You know of what consequence it is for persons of quality to discharge such a debt. It is indeed the only one that the punctilio of honour obliges us to pay with punctuality. As for the rest, they are not to be minded. You must therefore get me 200 pistoles presently, and send them to the Countess of Pedrosa." Sir," says the steward, "it is much easier to say it than do it. Where, an't please you, shall I find such a sum? Your tenants do not bring me a maravedi, though I threaten them hard. I must take care of your family, whatever is done for it; and they suck my very blood to answer the expence. Hitherto I have gone through with it; but I cannot hold out longer without a miracle." "All that you say signifies nothing," cries Don Matthias, interrupting him: "your particularities serve only to vex me. Do not think, Rodriguez, that I will change my course of life, or take care of my estate. A fine employment that! for a man of pleasure as I am." "Truly, Sir," replied Rodriguez, "as matters go, I foresee you will soon have that care taken off your hands." "You tease me to death," says the young Lord a little hastily. "Let me ruin myself without knowing it. I tell you I must have 200 pistoles. I must have them." "I will go again to the little old man, who has already sent you so much at interest," replies Rodriguez. "I do not care whom you go to," says Don Matthias, "so
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I have the money. Go to the devil for it if you will."

As he was speaking these words hastily and angrily, the steward went out; and a young man of quality, called *Don Antonio Centelles*, entered. "What is the matter, friend?" says the latter to my master. "You are cloudy, and seem in a passion. Who has put you into such an ill humour? I will lay a wager it is the man I met." "Yes," replied *Don Matthias*; "it is my steward. Every time I speak to him, it is always thus. He will be talking of my affairs to me. He tells me I shall eat myself out of house and home. A wretch:—He will lose nothing by it, however it goes." "I am just in the same case," cries *Don Antonio*. "I have such another impertinent steward. When the coxcomb, after my repeated orders, brings me any money, he does it as if he gave it to me. He is full of his advice. "Sir," cries he, "you will undo yourself. Your rents are seized." I am forced to interrupt him, and cut him short in his discourse." "The worst of it is," says *Don Matthias*, "we cannot do without these men. They are a necessary evil." "They are so," replies *Centelles*. "But hold, I have one of the pleasantest thoughts come into head that ever man had." With that he burst out into a fit of loud laughter; and then continued, "Nothing can be better contrived. We will turn these serious scenes into comic, and divert ourselves with what has so much vexed us. It is this: I will demand of your steward as much money as you have occasion for. Do you do the same by mine. Let them then lecture us as much as they please, we shall hear them with indifference. Your steward shall bring me his accounts. My steward shall do the same by you. You will hear of nothing but my extravagances. I shall hear of nothing but of yours. It will be a pretty frolic, will it not?"

They both tickled themselves with the thoughts of

of it; and were laughing at it, when their mirth was interrupted by Gregorio Rodriguez, who returned, followed by a little old man that had scarce a hair upon his head, so bald was he. Don Antonio would have gone. "Adieu, Don Matthias" says he; "we shall see one another again by and by. I leave you with these gentlemen. You have doubtless some business of consequence together." "No, no," replied my master, "stay, this sage old person is an honest man who lends me money at 20 *per cent*." "How! 20 *per cent*," cries Centelles, in a surprise: "you light of honest men than I do. I am forced to pay dear for every penny I borrow: 40 *per cent* is my common rate." "Extortion!" says the old usurer. "What rogues they are? Do not they think there is another world? I do not wonder people rail so much at usury. It is the exorbitancy of it that makes it so dishonourable. If all my brethren were like me, we should not be decried so much. For my part, I generally lend my money only to do my neighbour a kindness. Ah! if the times were as they have been, I would offer you my purse without interest; and, as bad as they are now, I can hardly in my conscience take even so little as 20 *per cent*. But they say there is no silver in the mines; that the bowels of the earth are drained of it; and its scarcity makes me encroach upon morality. How much do you want?" continued he, addressing himself to my master. "Two hundred pistoles," replied Don Matthias. "I have four hundred in a bag," says the usurer. "You may have half of them." Saying this, he pulled a blue bag from under his cloak, which seemed to me to be the very bag in which the peasant Talego brought the five hundred pistoles to Rodriguez. I guessed immediately what was the meaning of it; and soon after perceived that Melendez had not misinformed me, when he boasted of the steward's dexterity. The old

old man emptied the pistoles on the table; the sight of which made my master greedy of all. He was finitten with the totality of the sum. "Signior Descomulgado," says he to the usurer, "I have thought better of it, and find myself to be a block-head. I asked to borrow only what I had passed my word for, not thinking that I had not a penny in my purse. I will take the whole four hundred pistoles, to save the trouble of sending for you again." "I intended," replied the usurer, "to lend part of this money to a clergyman, who has entered some maidens in a nunnery, and is about furnishing their lodgings for them; but, since you have occasion for all of it, it is at your service. All you have to do is to provide security." "As for security," cries Rodriguez, interrupting him, and taking a paper out of his pocket, "you shall have very good. Signior Don Matthias need only sign this bill; it will entitle you to five hundred pistoles upon Talego, a rich peasant of Mondejar." "It is very well," replies the usurer: "I am not very difficult." Then the steward presented a pen to my master; who, without reading it, set his name to the bill, whistling all the while he was writing.

This affair over, the old man bade my master adieu. Don Matthias ran and embraced him, crying, "Till next time, Signior Descomulgado, I am yours. I cannot imagine why they should treat usurers as rascals. I think you are men necessary to the state. You are the consolation of a thousand heirs, and the resource of all the Lords, whose expense exceeds their income." "Very true," says Centelles; "the usurers are men of honour, who cannot be too much honoured. Let me also embrace this worthy person, for the sake of his twenty *per cent.*" Saying this, he approached the old man to hug him: and these two beaux pushed him from one to the other, by way of diversion, as a ball is stricken at tennis. After they had done with him,

him, the steward, who deserved it as much as he, and a great deal more, took him away. They were no sooner gone, than Don Matthias sent the two hundred pistoles to the Countess of Pedrosa, by the lackey that was in the room with me. The other two hundred pistoles he put up in a long silk purse, which he usually carried about with him. Being highly pleased to find himself so well in cash, he demanded with a great deal of gaiety of Don Antonio, "What shall we do to day? Let us consult." "You talk like a man of sense," replies Centelles; "let us deliberate upon the matter." While they were considering it, two other Lords entered the chamber. Don Alexio Segiar, and Don Fernand de Gamboa, both of them near about the same age with my master, who was twenty-eight or twenty-nine years old. These four gentlemen embraced as if they had not seen one another in ten years before. After which Don Fernand, who was a boon companion, said, addressing himself to my master, "Where do you dine to-day? if you are not engaged, I will carry you to a tavern where you shall drink the liquor of the gods. I supped there, and did not come away till between five and six this morning." "Would to heaven," cried my master, "I had done the same, I should not have lost my money then." "For my part," said Centelles, "I found out a new diversion last night. I love change in my pleasures. Nothing but variety can render life agreeable. One of my friends carried me to the house of a custom house-officer; a set of men who do their own and the state's business together. Every thing was magnificent, and the entertainment very elegant: but the master of the house had something in him extremely ridiculous. Though he was but an ordinary fellow at the beginning, he pretended mightily to quality, and his wife to beauty, though she was horribly ugly. They had both a Biscayan brogue in their talk, which made the silly things

things they said still more pleasant. Their children, in number five or six, with their preceptor, were all set to table. Judge you what their breeding was."

"I supped," cries Don Alexio Segia, "with the actress Arsenia. We were six of us, Arsenia, Florimonda, with a coquette, a friend of hers, the Marquis de Zeneta, Don Juan de Moncado, and your servant. We spent the night in drinking and talking merrily. What pleasure was it! It is true, Arsenia and Florimonda are not overstocked with wit; but then they are wanton jades, and that is as good as witty. They are brisk, frolicsome wenches: and I love them a thousand times better than your prim, precise dames, that pique themselves of sense and virtue."

C H A P. IV.

How Gil Blas became acquainted with valets belonging to beaux. An admirable secret they taught him to acquire the reputation of a man of wit; and the singular oath they made him take.

THESE Lords continued to divert themselves in this manner, till Don Matthias, whom I was all the while dressing, was ready to go out with them. He then bade me follow him; and all these four rakes went together to the tavern Don Fernand de Gamboa had proposed to them. I marched behind them, with three other valets; for each of those gentlemen had one. I observed with astonishment, that each of those valets copied after his master, and gave himself the same airs. I saluted them as their new comrade. They returned my salute: and one of them, after having looked some time stedfastly upon me, said, "I perceive, brother, by your air, that you never yet served a young Lord." "No," replied I; "I have not been long in Madrid." "So I thought," said he, "you have a country-look still: you seem timorous and confused,

fed. You do not know how to behave yourself. But no matter: we shall make something of you."

"You flatter me," replied I. "No, no," says he; "there is no man such a blockhead, but we can improve him. Depend upon it, we will do your business for you."

He need say no more to give me to understand, that I had a company of rare sparks for my brother-valets; and that I could not have fallen into better hands to learn my trade. At our coming to the tavern, we found an entertainment prepared for them. Signior Don Fernand had bespoke it in the morning. Our masters sat down to table, and we stood ready to serve them. They were extremely pleasant all the while they were at dinner; and I took great delight to hear them talk. Their character, their thoughts, and expressions, diverted me. What fire! what fancy! They seemed to me to be a new species of men. After the dessert was brought in, we spread the table with bottles of the most excellent wine; and left them to go to dinner ourselves, in a room where the cloth was laid on purpose for us.

I soon found, that the cavaliers of my fraternity had more merit than I at first imagined. They were not contented with assuming the manner of their masters: they affected the language also: and these rogues imitated them so well, that there was no difference, except the quality-air. Their air was free and easy. I was charmed with their wit, and despaired of ever becoming so agreeable as they were. Don Fernand's valet, because his master treated the others, had the management of the feast; and, that we might want nothing, called the landlord, and said, "Master Andrew Mantuano, give us ten bottles of your most excellent wine; and, as you are used to do, put them down in our master's reckoning." "With all my heart," replied the host: "but Master Gaspard," added he, "you know
Signior

Signior Don Fernand owes me a great many reckonings already. If by your means I could touch a little money"—“Oh, Sir,” answered the valet, “do not be in any pain on that score. I will answer for him. My master’s debts are as good as old gold. It is true, some ill-bred creditors have seized our rents; but we shall out them in a little while, sell our estates, and clear off all, without inquiring into the particulars of your bill.” Mantuano brought the wine, notwithstanding the rents were seized; and we drank it before the creditors were outed. We toasted one another’s healths by the surnames of our masters. Don Antonio’s valet called Don Fernand’s *Gamboa*, and Don Fernand’s valet called Don Antonio’s *Centelles*. My name was *Silva* with them; and we got as fuddled by degrees, under those borrowed names, as the Lords who bore them.

Though I was not so brilliant as my brethren, they expressed themselves to be very well satisfied with me. “Silva,” said one of the loosest of them, “we shall make something of thee. I find that thou hast a genius at bottom, but thou dost not yet know how to use it. The fear of speaking ill, hinders thy speaking any thing at a venture; and I must tell thee, that it is by venturing any thing in conversation that men now-a-days acquire the name of wits. Wouldst thou shine? follow the vivacity of thy nature, and say every thing that comes uppermost. Thy impudence will pass for a noble boldness. If thou canst but crack one jest among a hundred impertinencies, the foolish things thou sayest shall be taken no notice of; and thou shalt be deemed a man of merit. This is what our masters practise so successfully; and thus every man should do that aims at the reputation of a distinguished wit.”

Besides, that I had too great a desire already to pass for a fine genius, the secret to succeed in it appeared so easy to me, that I thought I ought not to neglect it. I made a trial of it on the spot; and the
wine

wine I had drank, gave success to the experiment ; that is, I talked, right or wrong, whatever came into my head ; and had the good fortune, among many extravagancies, to mingle some points of wit, which were mightily applauded. This essay filled me with confidence. I redoubled my usual vivacity, to produce some agreeable sally ; and chance was so much my friend, that my efforts were not ineffectual.

“ So now,” says one of my brethren, the same that had spoke to me in the street, “ dost thou not begin to mend upon it ? Thou hast not been with us above two hours, and thou art already another creature. Thou wilt alter for the better more and more every day. This it is to serve persons of quality. It raises the mind. City-places do not do so.” “ Without doubt,” replied I ; “ and hereafter I will dedicate my services to the nobility.” “ Well said,” cried Don Fernand’s valet, almost drunk, “ it is not for citizens to have such superior geniuses as we have. Let us take an oath, Gentlemen, among ourselves, never to serve such fellows. Let us swear by Styx.” We all laughed at Gaspard’s thought ; we applauded it ; and every man, with his glass in his hand, took the burlesque oath.

We sat at table till it pleased our masters to retire. It was midnight first. And my brethren took it for an excess of sobriety, that they went home so soon. Indeed these Lords went from the tavern, only to visit a famous coquette who lived in the court-quarter, whose house was open night and day to men of pleasure. She was about thirty-five years of age. She wore extremely well, and was so agreeable in company, that it is said, she sold the remains of her beauty as dear as she did the first fruits. She had always with her two or three coquettes of the first order, which drew a great concourse of Lords to her house. They gamed in the afternoon ; they supped at night, which they spent in

in drinking, and making themselves merry. Our masters staid there till morning. So did we, without being tired ; for, while they were with the mistresses, we diverted ourselves with the maids. At last, when day broke, we separated, and went each to his rest. My master, according to custom, rose about noon, dressed himself, and went out. I waited upon him to the house of Don Antonio Centelles, where we found one Don Alvaro de Acunha, an old debauchee. All the young men, who would render themselves agreeable, put themselves into his hands. He formed them for pleasure. He taught them how to shine in the world, and waste their estates. He was not afraid of spending his. That business was done long before. After the natural embraces of these gentlemen were over, Centelles said to my master, " S'death, Don Matthias, thou couldst not come hither more *à propos*. Alvar is come to carry me to dine with a citizen who treats the Marquis de Zeneta and Don Juan de Moncado to-day. Thou shalt go with us." " What is the citizen's name ?" says Don Matthias. " *Gregorio de Noriega*," replies Don Alvaro, " and I will tell you, in two words, what this young man is. His father, who is a rich jeweller, is gone to trade in jewels in foreign countries, and left with him, when he went, a very good income. Gregorio is a coxcomb, who has a towardly disposition to ruin himself, and set up for a beau and-a wit, in spite of nature. He has desired me to instruct him. I govern him ; and can assure you, Gentlemen, I have put him in a right way. His income is already pretty well diminished." " I do not doubt it," cried Centelles. " I see him methinks in an alms-house. Come, Don Matthias," continued he, " let us scrape acquaintance with this man, and contribute to his ruin." " With all my heart," replied my master ; " I love dearly to see those mechanic fops reduced, who pretend to our airs and manners. Nothing, for example, pleas-

ed me better, than when the collector's son was so beggared by gaming and vanity, in making a figure like a Lord, that he was forced to sell his house over his head." "As for him," replies Antonio, "he does not deserve to be pitied. He is as great a fop in his misery, as he was in his prosperity."

Centelles and my master accompanied Don Alvaro to Gregorio Noriega's. Mogicon and I went with them, overjoyed that we were like to come in for snips, and contribute also to the citizen's ruin. When we came there, we found several men very busy in getting dinner ready. The fumes of the ragouts were most grateful odours to us. The Marquis de Zeneta, and Don Juan de Moncado were just arrived. The master of the house appeared to be, what Alvaro said, a great coxcomb. He in vain affected to assume the airs of a beau. He was a wretched copy of so excellent an original; or rather a blockhead that would fain have put himself off for a man of sense. Represent to yourself a man of this character, among five sparks rallying him, each of them making a jest of him, and endeavouring to draw him into extravagancies. "Gentlemen," says Don Alvaro, after the first compliments were over, "I recommend Signior Gregorio de Noriega to you for an accomplished cavalier. He has a thousand fine qualities. Do you know how he has improved himself? Put it to the experiment: he is equally master of all the sciences, from logic to orthography." "You do me too much honour," says the citizen, interrupting him with an awkward smile; "I could turn that argument upon you, Signior Alvaro; you, who are styled one of the fountains of learning." "I did not think," cried Don Alvaro, "that I should have drawn upon myself so witty a panegyric. But, to say the truth, Gentlemen, Signior Gregorio cannot fail of acquiring a reputation in the world." "As for me," cries Don Antonio, "what I take to be most charm-

ing in him, and value infinitely above his orthography, is, the judicious choice he makes of the persons he frequents. Instead of confining himself to a city-conversation, he keeps company with none but young lords, not minding what a charge it puts him to. This shews a greatness of soul, and that he knows how to spend his estate with delicacy and discernment." These ironical discourses made way for a thousand of the same nature. They all fell upon poor Gregorio; and he was such a fool as not to perceive it. On the contrary, he took every thing to be meant as it was said, and was mightily pleased with his guests. He even imagined, that they did him a favour, to turn him into ridicule. In fine they played upon him all the while they were at dinner. They staid with him all day, and all night too. We drank what we would, as well as our masters, and were both in a handsome pickle when we left him.

CHAP. V.

Gil Blas sets up for a gallant man, and gets acquaintance with a pretty girl.

I Slept some hours, and rose in a gay humour, remembering the advice Melendez gave me. I went while my master was yet asleep, to make my court to our steward, who seemed to take my respects very graciously. He asked me how I liked this way of living? I replied, it was new to me; but I did not despair of accustoming myself to it; which indeed I did effectually, and in a little time too. I changed humour, and from grave became frolicksome. Don Antonio's valet complimented me on my metamorphosis, and told me that I wanted nothing now to finish me for a cavalier but an affair of gallantry, which was absolutely necessary to render a young man completely polite. That all our comrades were beloved by some fair lady, and that

that he, for his part, was in the good graces of two ladies of quality. I believed the rascal lied. "Monsieur Mogicon," says I, "you are a jolly, handsome fellow; but I cannot understand how women of quality can fall in love with a man of your condition." "Oh? as for that," replied he, "they do not know who I am. I make conquests in my master's cloaths, and even with his name, as thus: I am dressed like a young lord; I imitate the manners of one; I go to the public places; I ogle all the women I meet, till I fix on one that gives me encouragement; I follow her, and get into talk with her. I call myself *Don Antonio Centelles*. I demand an assignation. The lady seems coy. I press her. She complies. &c. &c. By this means, child," continues he, "I have affairs of gallantry upon my hands; and I advise thee to follow my example." I had too great a desire to become a gallant man, not to take his advice. Besides, I did not find any repugnance in myself to an amorous intrigue. I designed the more to transform myself into a young lord, and seek out some gallant adventures. I durst not disguise myself in our palace, for fear notice should be taken of it. I took one of the finest suits in my master's wardrobe. I bundled it up, and carried it to a barber's, a friend of mine, where I might dress and undress myself commodiously. I made myself as fine as I could. The barber assisted me in doing it: and when I thought we had done enough, I marched towards the walk of St. Jerom, where I doubted not but I should meet with more opportunities than one to enter upon gallantry. But before I got there, I lighted upon an adventure, which I was wonderfully charmed with: As I was crossing a by-street, I saw a lady, richly dressed, and very well shaped, go out of a little house into a hackney coach which waited at the door. I stepped to look after her, and saluted her

in a way which shewed I was not a little taken with her. She, on her part, to shew that she observed my attention, perhaps more than I thought she did, lifted up her veil for a moment, and discovered one of the prettiest faces I ever saw. The coach drove away: and I staid behind in the emotion this apparition had caused in my breast. "A lovely creature," said I to myself; "she will furnish me, I will warrant her. If the two ladies that are in love with Mogicon are as handsome as this, he is a happy dog. I should think myself so, if I had such a mistress." As I was making these reflections, I chanced to cast my eye at a window of the house whence this amiable person came, and perceived an old woman, who beckoned to me to enter. I flew into it, and found the venerable, discreet matron in a parlour, neatly furnished. She took me for a marquis at least, and saluting me very respectfully said, "I doubt not, my Lord, you have an ill opinion of a woman, who, without knowing you, made a sign to you to enter the house; but you will alter it, perhaps, when you know that I deal with all the world in this free way. You look to be a court-lord." "You judge well, my dear," cried I, stretching out my right leg, and falling away a little to the left, "I may without vanity say, I am one of the best families in Spain." "You have the air," replied she; "and I must own I love to do good offices to persons of your quality. It is my foible. I took notice of you at my window, and observed you ogle a lady who had just then parted with me. Do you like her? Tell me truly." "Yes," cried I, "I am smitten with her, upon my honour. I never saw so charming a creature. Bring us together, and depend upon my gratitude. You have done services of this kind for other persons of my quality, and know by that how well we are used to pay for them." "I have told you," says she, "that
I am

I am devoted to serve the quality. I delight to be useful to them. I entertain here, for example, certain ladies, whom an appearance of virtue hinders from seeing their gallants at home." "Very well," cried I; "and it is probable, you have been doing as much for the lady we talk of." "No," replied she, "it is a young widow of quality, who is willing to have a lover; but she is so nice, I cannot tell whether you would succeed, whatever may be your merit. I have already recommended three very likely gentlemen, but she has refused them all." "Death! my dear," said I, with an air of confidence, "do but bring me into her company once, and I will answer for the rest; I want to have some dialogue with so nice a lady. I never yet met with one too nice for me." "Well then," answered the old woman, "come hither to-morrow at this time, and you shall satisfy your curiosity." "I will not fail," replied I. "We shall see whether a young lord may not pretend to a conquest."

I returned thence to the barber's, without looking out for other adventures, and very impatient to see the end of this. The next day, when I had adjusted myself to the best advantage, I went at the time appointed to the old woman's. "My lord," says she, "you are punctual, and I am glad of it. The business is worth the trouble. I have seen our young widow; and we have had a great deal of discourse about you. I was bid not to speak of it; but I am so much your friend, that I cannot help it. She is as much taken with you, as you are with her; and you are in a fair way to be happy. Between you and me, this lady is a choice bit. Her husband did not live long with her. He was but a sort of a shadow; she is as good as a virgin." The old woman meant, without doubt, one of her virgins, who knew how to pass

their celibacy without wanting husbands. The heroine of the assignation arrived soon after in an hackney-coach. As soon as she came into the hall, I accosted her with five or six foppish bows, and then approaching her very familiarly, said, "My princess, behold a lord that is taken in your snare. Your image has not been out of my mind ever since I saw you yesterday; and you have driven out a dulness that had began to take footing there." "The triumph is too glorious for me," replied she, lifting up her veil: "but I must not rejoice too much. Young lords love change; and nothing is so hard to keep as a courtier's heart." "Ah! my queen," cried I; "if you please let us leave that to the future, and think now of the present. You are fair: I am in love. If my love is agreeable to you, let us engage without reflection: let us embark like mariners, and not dread the dangers of the sea. Let us think only of pleasure." At these words I threw myself at her feet in a transport of joy; and to imitate the beaux, I pressed her very petulantly to consent to my happiness. She seemed to be complying; but would not yield at the first meeting: so she pushed me back; "Hold," cried she, "you are too forward; you act like a rake: I am afraid you are a young debauchee." "Puh, Madam," said I, "do you hate what all women that are not vulgar love; None but citizens are afraid of a rake. "Your reasons," replied she, "are too powerful to be resisted. I perceive it is to no purpose to dissemble with you young lords. A woman must come half way. Know therefore the victory you have gained," continued she, with seeming confusion, as if her modesty had been injured by that confession, "you have inspired me with sentiments I never felt before; and I want nothing now but to know who you are, to make me chuse you
for

for my lover. I take you to be a young lord, and a man of honour: however, I am not sure of it; and as prejudiced as I am in your favour, I will not give myself to one I do not know."

I called to mind in what manner Don Antonio's valet told me he used to extricate himself out of such difficulties; and resolving, like him, to pass for the master; "Madam," says I to my widow, "I shall make no scruple to tell you my name. It is too noble for a man to be ashamed of it. Did you never hear talk of Don Matthias de Silva?" "Yes," replied she, "I have seen him at a friend's of mine." As impudent as I was become, this answer of her's puzzled me a little; but I recollected myself in a moment, and put my genius to the stretch to come off cleverly. "Ah! my angel," replied I, "you know a lord that I know also. I am of the same family. His uncle married a sister-in-law of an uncle of my father's. We are, as you see, very nearly related. My name is Don Caesar. I am the only son of the illustrious Don Fernand de Ribera, who was killed fifteen years ago in a battle on the frontiers of Portugal. I might give you a particular account of the action, which was very hot; but it would be to lose the moments which are precious in love, and may be employed much more agreeably."

I became more pressing and passionate after this discourse. My princess was not at all moved by it. The favours she gave me, only made me long for others which she refused. The cruel creature left me in this condition, went to her coach, and drove away. Though I was not entirely happy, yet I was pleased with my good fortune. "If I have not obtained the favour I pressed for," said I to myself, "it is because my goddess is a lady of quality, who would not appear forward, nor comply with my desires at the first interview. Her high birth makes her delay my joys for a few days."

With all these favourable thoughts of her, I could not sometimes help thinking she might be a cunning gypsey, and did it to draw me in. However, I loved to think the best; and the most advantageous opinion I had of her, had the predominancy in my mind. We agreed when we parted to meet again the next day; and the hopes of enjoying then the height of my wishes, gave me a taste of them beforehand. With these pleasing fancies in my head, I returned to my barber's. I changed my cloaths, and went to my master, whom I knew to be at the tennis-court. I found him at play, and observed that he gained, by his looks: for he was not one of those insensible gamesters that make or ruin themselves without changing countenance. He was merry and insolent when he got, and furly when he lost. From the tennis-court he went in a very gay humour to the prince's theatre. I waited upon him to the play-house-door, where, putting a ducat into my hand, he cried to me, "There, Gil Blas, since I have had good fortune to-day, be thou so much the better for it. Go, divert thyself with thy comrades, and come to me at midnight at Arsenia's, where I shall sup with Don Alexio Segiar. At these words he went into the house, and I staid without, studying with whom to spend my ducat, according to the intention of the founder. I was not long at a loss about it. Clarino, Don Alexio's valet, falling in my way, I took him with me to the first tavern, and we staid there till midnight. From thence we went to Arsenia's, whither Clarino had orders to come as well as I. A little lackey opened the door, and conducted us into a little hall, where Arsenia and Florimonda's women were making merry, while their mistresses were doing the same with our masters. The coming of two good guests, who were already half fuddled, could not be disagreeable to two such baggages as they were, especially con-

considering they were players. But how was I astonished, when in one of them, I discovered my widow, my adorable widow, whom I took to be a countess or a marchioness. She was no less surprised to find her dear Don Cæsar, de Ribera reduced to a valet de chambre. We however, looked upon one another some time, without being out of countenance. We had both of us a great mind to burst out a laughing; and we did not long forbear it. After which, Laura, so my princess was called, taking me aside, while Clarino talked with her companion, and giving me her hand, whispered me, "Since it is so, Signior Don Cæsar, let us not reproach one another, but do each other justice. You played your part admirably, and I did not act mine ill: what say you? Did not you take me for one of those pretty women of quality who delight in intrigue?" "It is true," replied I; "but be you who you will, my queen, I have not changed sentiments in changing forms. Accept of my services, and suffer Don Matthias's valet to finish what Don Cæsar so happily began." "Well," said she, "I love thee better as thou art now naturally, than I did before. Thou art as a man, the same as I am as a woman: that is the greatest encomium I can bestow on thee. I admit thee among the number of my adorers. We have no need of the agency of the old woman. Thou mayst come hither freely. The ladies of the theatre live without constraint, hidgelly pidgelly among the men. The public sees it, laughs at it; and what then? are we not made for their diversion?"

We left off here, because there were others in the room. The conversation became general, brisk, wanton, and full of very intelligible double entendres. Every one said something, and especially my amiable Laura, Arsenia's woman, shewed that she had a great deal more wit than virtue. We

could often hear our masters and the players laugh aloud ; and guessed by that, their conversation was of the same nature with ours. If all the fine things which were said that night at Arsenia's were written down, it would make a book of great instruction for youth. The time of departing, that is, day break, coming upon us, we each retired with our masters, Clarino with Don Alexio, and I with Don Matthias.

CHAP. VI.

Of the discourse of some Lords about the players of the prince's company.

IN the forenoon my master received a billet from Don Alexio Segiar to desire him to come to him. We went to his house, and found there the Marquis of Zeneta, and another young Lord whom I had not seen before. "Don Matthias," says Segiar to my master, presenting that cavalier to him, "this is my kinsman Don Pompeo de Castro. He has been bred up from his youth in the court of Portugal. He arrived at Madrid last night, and returns to-morrow to Lisbon. He can give me but this one day. We must make the most of so precious a one ; and I thought I should want you and the Marquis de Zeneta, to help me out in it." Upon this my master and Don Alexio's kinsman embraced ; and many a compliment passed between them. I was mightily pleased with what Don Pompeo said, he seeming to be a man of as much judgment as wit.

They dined at Segiar's : and those lords, after dinner, gamed till play time. They then went together to the prince's theatre, to see a new tragedy called *The queen of Carthage*. When the play was done, they returned to sup at the same place where they had dined. Their conversation rolled at first on the play they had heard, and afterwards
on

on the players. "As for the play," cries Don Matthias, "I have no opinion of it. *Æneas* is flatter there than in the *Æneid*; but it was played divinely. What does Don Pompeio think of it? He does not seem to be of the same sentiment. "Gentlemen," says the cavalier, smiling, "I observed you were so charmed with the actors, and especially with the actresses, that I dare not give you my opinion." "Very well," cries Don Alexio, interrupting him; "have a care what you say of our actresses before us, who are the trumpets of their fame, drink with them every day, and are their guarantees. We will give certificates for them if you require it." "I doubt it not," replied his kinsman; "you will warrant their lives and manners as well as their merit, I see you are so much their friends."

"Your Lisbon players," says the Marquis de Zeneta, smiling, "are without doubt much better than ours." "Most certainly," replied Don Pompeio; "there are some at least that have no defect." "These are sure of your certificate," says the Marquis. "I have no correspondence with them," replies Don Pompeio. "I never drink with them: I am therefore qualified to judge of them without prejudice. Tell me truly, Do you really take your players to be an excellent company?" "Not I," says the Marquis; "I will speak but for very few of them. I will give up all the rest. Will not you allow that the actress who played the part of Dido, did it incomparably? Did she not represent that queen with all the grandeur and all the grace that suit the idea we have of her? Did you not admire to see with what art she engages a spectator, and makes him feel the emotions of all the passions she expresses? She is perfect mistress of all the beauties of declamation." "I grant," replied Don Pompeio, "she knows how to move and touch: never player had more bowels, and

and the representation was fine : but she is not an actress without fault. Two or three things in her playing shocked me. When she would denote surprise, she rolls her eyes in a furious manner, which does not become a princess. Add to this, that by heightening her voice, which is naturally low, she spoils the sweetness of it, and makes it harsh. Besides, in more than one place of the play, she did not seem to understand what she said : but I will rather think her thoughts were distracted, than accuse her of want of understanding."

By what I can see," says Don Matthias to the critic, "our players are not like to have any panegyrics from you." "Pardon me," replies Don Pompeio, "I discover a talent through their defects ; nay, I must own to you, I was charmed with the actress who played the woman's part in the interlude. She has a fine genius, and gave a grace to every thing she said. If there was a jest in it, she seasoned it with a malicious smile, and added new charms to it. One may blame her sometimes for giving too much way to her natural fire, and passing the bounds of an honest boldness : but we must not be too severe. I would only have her correct an ill custom. Often in the middle of a scene, in a serious place, she on a sudden interrupts the action, to please a fond desire of laughing, with which she is taken. You will say the pit clapped her then. Therein indeed she is happy."

"And what do you think of the men?" cries the Marquis, interrupting him ; "you will sure have no mercy on them, since you spare the women so little." "No," says Don Pompeio, "there are some of the young actors very promising ; and I was especially very well pleased with the fat actor who played the part of Dido's first minister. He speaks naturally, and like our Portuguese players." "If you were pleased with him," says Segiar, "you must surely be charmed with the player that
acted

acted the part of *Æneas*. Is he not a fine actor ? an original ?" "An original indeed !" replied the critic. "He has tones which are particular to him, and very sharp ones. He is almost always out of nature. He hurries over the words in which the sense lies, and dwells on the others ; nay, he raises his voice on conjunctions. He diverted me extremely, and particularly where he expressed to his confident the violence he did to himself to leave Dido. Grief cannot be declared more comically." "Very fine, cousin," says Don Alexio ; "you will at last make us believe the court of Portugal have no refined *gout*. Do you not know that the actor you talk of is mightily admired ? did you not hear how he was clapped ?" "That is no proof of his merit," replies Don Pompeio ; "the worst actors are commonly the greatest favourites of the pit, and have the most claps. The audience likes what is glaring, and neglects what is just, as Phædrus informs us, by an ingenious fable ; which suffer me to relate to you as follows.

"The citizens of a certain city met at a great square to see some pantomimes act their buffoneries. Among these actors there was one whom the people applauded every moment. This buffoon, when the show was almost over, would needs close it with something new. He came alone upon the stage, bent down, covered his head with his cloak, and set himself to counterfeit the cry of a sucking pig. He did it so well, that they all believed he had a pig under his cloak. They cried out to him to throw open his cloak and robe. He did so ; and the people finding there was nothing under them, repeated their applauses with more fury than ever. A peasant who was among the spectators, was shocked with so many tokens of their admiration : "Gentlemen," cries he, "you are in the wrong to be so charmed with this buffoon. He is not such a rare actor as you take him to be. I can act a sucking pig

pig better than he; and if you question it, come here to-morrow, and you shall be witnesses of it yourselves." The citizens, prejudiced in favour of the pantomime, met again the next day, rather to hiss the peasant, than see what he could do. The two rivals appeared on the theatre. The buffoon began, and received the same applauses as the day before. Then the peasant bending down in his turn, and covering his head with his cloak, took a true sucking pig, which he had under his arm, by the ear, and the pig squeaked heartily. However, the audience gave the preference to the pantomime, and hissed the peasant; who pulled out the sucking pig, and shewing it to them, said, "Gentlemen, it is not I that you hiss; it is the pig itself. See what judges you are."

"Cousin," cries Don Alexio, "thy fable is a little too close a one. Nevertheless, spite of thy sucking pig, we shall not give up our actors and actresses. Let us change the discourse: we have had enough of this. You will go to-morrow then, as desirous as I am to keep you longer." "I should be glad to stay," replies his kinsman, "if I could. I have already told you that I came to the court of Spain about a state-affair. I spoke to the prime minister yesterday. I am to see him again to-morrow morning, and shall depart a moment after to return to Lisbon." "Thou art become a Portuguese," says Don Alexio; "and in all likelihood will return no more to Madrid." "I believe not," replies Don Pompeio. "I have the happiness to be beloved by the King of Portugal. I live pleasantly at his court: yet, as gracious as he is to me, can you think it? I was very near leaving his dominions for ever." "On what occasion?" cries the Marquis, "Pray tell us." "Most willingly," replies Don Pompeio; "and my story is contained in what I am about to relate to you."

C H A P. VII.

The story of Don Pompeo de Castro.

DON Alexio, continues he, knows, that, from my youth, I took an inclination to arms; and, seeing our country was in peace, I went to Portugal; from whence I crossed over to Africa with the Duke of Braganza, who gave me a post in his army. I was a cadet, and not one of the richest in Spain, which spurred me on to signalize myself in several actions; and that made me taken notice of by the general. I did my duty so well, that the Duke advanced me, and put me in a condition to continue in his service with honour. After a long war, the end of which you are not ignorant of, I settled at court, and the king, on the recommendation of the general officers, allowed me a considerable pension. To shew how sensible I was of that monarch's generosity, I let no opportunity slip to express my gratitude by my assiduity. I was near him at all hours when the courtiers were admitted into his presence. By this conduct I insensibly became beloved by him, and received new benefits from him.

Having one day distinguished myself in a ring-course and bull fight, the whole court extolled my strength and dexterity; and, when loaded with their applauses, I got home, I found a billet which informed me, that a lady, the conquest of whom ought to rejoice me more than all the honour I had acquired that day, desired to speak with me; and that I need only come to a certain place appointed, in the dusk of the evening. I was indeed more pleased with this letter than all the applauses before mentioned; and imagined, that the person who sent it was a woman of the first quality. You don't doubt but I was punctual at the time and place. An old woman waited there to be my guide; and introduced

roduced me by a little door into the garden of a great house, whence she carried me into a rich closet, full of rich decorations, saying, "Stay there, I will go tell my mistress of your coming." I examined the riches of the closet, which was enlightened by wax-candles in golden sconces; and this convinced me the lady must be as noble as I conceived her to be. If every thing I saw assured me of the nobility of her birth before she came, her appearance, her grand and majestic air confirmed me in that opinion; which however was a wrong one.

"Signior Cavalier," says she, "after the step I have taken in your favour, it would be in vain to endeavour to conceal the tender sentiments I have for you. The merit which the court were witnesses of this day, in regard to you, was not the first motive of them: it only hastened the discovery of them. I have seen you more than once. I informed myself of you; and your character is so good, that I resolved to follow my inclination. Do not think," continues she, "that you have made a conquest of a duchess. I am only the widow of a captain of the king's guards; but what will render your victory glorious, is, the preference I give you to one of the greatest lords in the kingdom. The Duke of Almeyda loves me, and spares for nothing to please me. He could never succeed; and I suffer his caresses only out of vanity."

Though I found by this discourse that I had to do with a coquette, yet I was not displeased at the adventure. Donna Hortensia, for that was her name, was still in the flower of her youth, and her beauty charmed me. Besides, I was offered the possession of a heart which a duke sought after in vain. What a triumph was that for a young Spanish cavalier! I threw myself at Hortensia's feet, to thank her for her goodness to me. I said all a gallant man could think of; and she had reason to be
satisfied

satisfied with my transports. Thus we parted the best friends in the world, after we had agreed to meet every evening that the Duke d'Almeyda did not come thither ; which I was promised to have exact intelligence of. They did not fail me ; and at last I became the Adonis of this new Venus.

But the pleasures of life are not of eternal duration. Whatever measures the lady took to keep our commerce from my rival, he came to the knowledge of what it imported us very much he should be ignorant of : one of the lady's maids, in disgust, told him all. This Lord, naturally generous, but proud, jealous, and passionate, was enraged at my audaciousness. Choler and jealousy disordered his mind ; and, hearkening only to his fury, he resolved to be revenged of me after an infamous manner. One night when I was at Hortensia's, he waited for me at the garden-door with all his valets, armed with sticks. As soon as I came out, he caused those rascals to seize me, and ordered them to beat me to death. " Strike," says he, " let him perish under your hands. I will thus chastise his insolence." At these words his people assaulted me all together, and gave me so many blows, that they laid me for dead on the place. After which they retired with their master, to whom this cruel spectacle had been a very pleasant one. About day-break some persons came by, who, observing I breathed still, had the charity to carry me to a surgeon ; and I, falling into the hands of a skilful one, was perfectly cured in two months time. I then went to court, and lived there as I used to do. I left off visiting Hortensia, who took no step to let me see her again, because the Duke had at this price forgiven her infidelity.

As no body was ignorant of my adventure, nor took me for a coward, every one admired that I should sit down so quietly under such an affront ; for I did not say what I thought, and I seemed not

to resent it. Some believed, that, as stout as I was, the rank of the offender kept me in awe, and obliged me to put up the offence. Others, with more reason, mistrusted my silence, and looked on the peaceable situation of my soul as a deceitful calm. The king was of the latter opinion; and imagined that I would not suffer such an outrage without revenge, as soon as I had an opportunity. To find out my design, he took me into his closet one day, and said to me, "Don Pompeio, I know the accident that has happened to you; and must confess I am surprised to find you so easy under it." "You certainly dissemble, Sir," replied I, "I know not who the offender is. I was attacked in the night by men who are unknown to me. It is a misfortune I must bear as well as I can." "No, no," says the king, "do not think that I can be so put upon, I have heard all. The Duke of Almeyda has mortally affronted you. You are noble, and a Castilian. I know what these qualities will engage you to do. You have formed a resolution to be revenged. Tell me what you intend to do; I require you. Fear nothing; you shall not repent of trusting me with your secret."

"Since your Majesty will have me," replied I, "I must inform you what I have resolved to do in this matter. Yes, my Lord, I do meditate revenge for the affront I have suffered. Every man that bears such a name as mine is accountable to his race. You know how basely I have been treated: and, to be revenged in a manner answerable to the offence, I propose to assassinate the Duke of Almeyda, by stabbing him with a dagger, or shooting him through the head: after which I will make my escape, if I can, into Spain. This is my design." "It is rash," said the King, "yet I cannot condemn it, after the cruel outrage the Duke of Almeyda has done you. He deserves the chastisement you have reserved for him: but do not execute your enterprize so soon.

Let

Let me find out some way to make the matter up between you." "Ah! my Lord," cried I, a little angrily, "why did you oblige me to reveal my secret to you?" "What way can there be found out? If it is not one that gives you satisfaction," said he, interrupting me, "you may do what you intend. I shall not abuse the confidence you put in me: I will not betray your honour. Be under no manner of concern on that score."

I was extremely desirous to know how the king would have this business accommodated. It was thus: he talked to the Duke of Almeyda about it. "Duke," says he, "you have affronted Don Pompeio de Castro. You are not ignorant that he is a man of an illustrious family, a gentleman whom I love, and who has done me service. You ought to give him satisfaction." "I shall not refuse it," replies the Duke. "If he complains of my fury, I am ready to do him justice by way of arms." "There must be another reparation," cries the king. "A Spanish gentleman understands the point of honour too well to fight fairly with a base assassin. I cannot call you any thing else; and you cannot expiate the indignities of your action, but by presenting a stick yourself to your enemy, and offering to receive his blows." "Heaven!" cries the Duke, "would you have a man of my rank, my Lord, so debase himself? to stoop to a gentleman, and receive blows from him?" "No," replies the monarch; "I will oblige Don Pompeio to promise me that he will not strike you: but do you ask his pardon when you present the stick to him; that is all I require of you." "It is too much, my Lord," says the Duke, hastily; "I had rather be still exposed to the danger I run from his concealed resentment." "Your life is dear to me," replies the king; "and I would prevent this affair's having any ill consequence: that it may end with as little dislike as may be to you, I myself will be the

the only witness of the satisfaction I order you to give the Spaniard." The king stood in need of all his power over the Duke, to bring him to consent to do so mortifying a thing. He brought him to it at last. He then sent for me, and told me what discourse he had with the Duke of Almeyda, demanding if I would be content with the reparation they two had agreed upon? I replied, "Yes; and would be so far from striking the offender, that I would not take the stick he presented to me." The matter being thus regulated, the Duke and I met one day, at a certain hour, in the king's apartment. His Majesty took us into his closet: "Come," says he to the Duke, "acknowledge your fault, and deserve a pardon." My enemy then made excuses to me, and presented me a stick he had in his hand. "Don Pompeo," cries the King at the instant, "take the stick, and let not my presence hinder you from doing justice to your injured honour. I discharge you from the promise you made me, not to strike the Duke." "No, my Lord," replied I; "it is sufficient that he puts himself in a posture to receive the blows. An affronted Spaniard demands no more." Well," says the King, "since you are both content with this satisfaction you may now determine the matter in a regular way, at the points of your swords." "That is what I earnestly desire," cries the Duke; "and nothing but that can make me reconcile myself to the shameful step I have been taking." At these words he went out, full of rage and confusion; and two hours after he sent to tell me he waited for me in a by-place. I went thither, and found him there in a disposition to fight it out to the last. He was not above five and forty years of age. He wanted neither courage nor skill. The parly was equal between us. "Come, Don Pompeo," says he, "let us end our difference. We both of us have reason to be angry; you for the treatment

treatment you met with from me; and I for having asked your pardon." Saying this, he drew so quickly that I had scarce time to be upon my guard. He pushed at first very vigorously; but I had the good fortune to parry all his thrusts. I pushed at him in my turn; and found I had to do with a man who knew as well how to defend himself as to attack. I know not what might have happened, had not his foot slipped in retiring, and that slip threw him on his back. I then held my hand, and said, "Rise." "Why do you spare me?" replied he: "your mercy is an affront to me." "I shall take no advantage of your misfortune," says I: "it would be an injury to my glory. I say once more, Rise, and let us continue the combat." "Don Pompeio," replied he, getting up, "after so generous an action, honour will not permit me to fight against you. What would the world say of me, if I should kill you? I should pass for a scoundrel, that took away the life of a man who might have taken mine. I shall not put it in any danger, and I find my gratitude gives birth to soft transports, which succeed the furious emotions that before ruffled my soul. Don Pompeio," continues he, "let us cease hating one another; let us do more, let us be friends." "Ah! my Lord," cried I, "I accept of your agreeable proposal with joy. I swear to you from this moment a sincere friendship; and to give you present proofs of it, I add to it, that I will never set foot within Hortensia's doors again, though she should desire it." "No," says he, "I ought rather to yield the lady to you, since she prefers you in her heart." "But you love her," replied I, interrupting him; "and her kindness to me may be troublesome to you. I will sacrifice it to your ease." "Ah! too generous Castilian," cries the Duke, holding me fast in his arms, "how am I charmed with your sentiments? What remorse do

do they create in my mind! With what grief, with what shame do I remember the outrage you have received! The satisfaction I gave you in the king's cabinet, appears to me now to be too small; I will make better reparation for the affront; and, to blot out the infamy of it for ever, I offer you one of my nieces who is at my disposal. She is a rich heiress of fifteen years of age, and fairer still than she is young." I returned the Duke's compliments as respectfully as the honour he did me to receive me into his alliance deserved. I married his niece a few days after. The whole court commended this lord for making the fortune of a young gentleman, whom he had covered with infamy: and my friends rejoiced with me, that an adventure, which might have ended so fatally, had such an happy issue. Ever since that time, Gentlemen, I have lived very pleasantly at Lisbon. I am beloved by my spouse, and still love her: the Duke of Almeyda is always giving me new tokens of his friendship, and I may say without boasting, that I am still well with the King of Portugal. The importance of my present journey to Madrid, assures me that I am still in his esteem.

C H A P. VIII.

By what accident Gil Blas was obliged to look out for a new place.

THUS did Don Pompeio finish his story, which Don Alexio's valet and I hearkened to in an outer room, for they had taken care to dismiss us from theirs before he began it. We staid behind the door, and listened so attentively, that we did not lose a word. After this, these lords drank on; but they left off before morning, because Pompeio was to be early with the prime minister, and desired to have a little rest. The Marquis de Zeneta and my

my master embraced that gentleman, bid him farewell, and left him with his kinsman.

We went to bed for this time before day-light ; and, when Don Matthias awoke, he gave me a new employment. " Gil Blas," says he, " take pen, ink, and paper, and write two or three words for me, which I will dictate to you. I make thee my secretary." " So," says I to myself, " this is a new business for me. As a lackey, I follow my master every where ; as a valet de chambre, I dress him ; and write for him as secretary. Heaven be praised, I am going, like the threefold Hecate, to act three different parts." " Thou dost not know," continues my master, " what my design is, but be discreet, and I will tell thee ; it is as much as thy life is worth to say any thing. As I meet every day with persons who boast of ladies favours ; to give them as good as they bring, I will have counterfeit letters in my pocket, which I will pretend came from women, and read them to them. This will divert me, and make me happier than my fellows, who are at the pains to obtain conquests merely for the pleasure of publishing them ; whereas I will publish them, and be at no pains in obtaining them ; but," added he, " so disguise thy hand, that the billets may not appear to come all from one person."

I took pen, ink, and paper, made myself ready to obey Don Matthias's commands, and he dictated a billet to me in the following terms. " You was not last night at the place of assignation. Ah ! Don Matthias, what can you say in your justification ? How was I mistaken ! You have justly punished me for believing that all the amusements, all the business in the world, should give way to the pleasures of your seeing Donna Clara de Mendoza." This billet being done, he dictated another to me, as from a woman which had left a prince for him ; and after this a third, from a lady, who told him, if she could be sure he would be discreet, she would take a voyage

age with him to the island of Venus. He not only caused me to write the letters, but to set the names of persons of quality to them. I could not help telling him I thought that was too nice and perilous a matter; but he desired me to give him advice only when he asked it. I was forced to hold my tongue, and to follow his orders. This affair dispatched, he rose, and I helped to dress him. He put the letters in his pocket, went out; and I waited on him to Don Juan de Moncado, who that day treated five or six gentlemen his friends. There was plenty of all things, and of joy, which gives the best relish to them at all festivals. Every one of the guests contributed to keep up the conversation, some by witticisms, others by stories of which they made themselves always the heroes. My master did not lose so fair an opportunity to value himself on the letters he had made me write; he read them out to the company, and with so confident an air, that every one but his secretary might have been deceived by it. Among the gentlemen to whom he read them, there was one named *Don Lopes de Velasco*. This man, who was very grave, instead of doing like the rest, and congratulating the reader on the favours he had received from those ladies, demanded of him sullenly, if the conquest of Donna Clara came cheaply? "Very easily," replied Don Matthias; "she made all the advances; she met me in the walks; she liked me, sent after me, understood who I was, wrote me a billet, appointed me to come to her at such an hour in the night, when all the family was abed but herself and her woman. I went to her house, was introduced to her apartment—I must beg pardon if I say no more; it is not consistent with discretion.

At this laconic recital, Signior de Velasco changed countenance; and it was plain he had an interest in the lady that was the subject of it. "All those billets," says he to my master, casting a furious

look at him, "are counterfeited, and especially that you boast to have received from Donna Clara de Mendoza: there is not a more reserved lady in Spain: a gentleman every way equal to you in birth and merit, has courted her these two years, and has scarce been able to obtain the most innocent favours; and may flatter himself, that, if ever she granted any others, it would be to himself only."

"How, Sir! do you say the contrary?" replies Don Matthias in a merry way. "I agree with you she is a lady of nice honour. And I too am a man of nice honour: consequently you ought to be satisfied that nothing but what was very honourable passed between us." Don Lopez, interrupting him, said, "This will not do, Sir; let us have none of your raillery: you are an impostor: Donna Clara never had an assignation with you by night; I cannot bear your injuring her reputation. I need not tell you any more." At these words, he broke up abruptly, and went away in a manner which shewed this affair would have ill consequences. My master, who was brave enough for a man of his character, despised Don Lopez's threats. "What a coxcomb he is?" cried he, bursting out a laughing; "knight-errants vindicate the beauty of their mistresses: he will vindicate the virtue of his; which I think is much more extravagant."

Velasco's withdrawing, which Moncado in vain endeavoured to hinder, did not break up the company. The gentlemen took little notice of it, and went on carousing till morning. By five o'clock my master and I were got to bed. I was very sleepy, and made account to have a good long nap of it; but I reckoned without my host, or rather without our porter, who awaked me an hour after, to tell me there was a youth demanded to speak with me. "The duce take the porter," cried I, gaping; "dost thou not know that I have not been in bed an hour? Tell the young man I am asleep, and that he must call again." "He says he must needs speak

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with you this minute," replied the porter. Upon which I got up, slipped on my coat and breeches, and went down, cursing the person whom I was going to. "Friend," says I, "be pleased to tell me what pressing affair procures me the honour of seeing you so early." "I have a letter," answered he, "to give in to Don Matthias's own hand, and he must read it this instant, it is of that vast consequence: I desire you would introduce me to him." Believing it was a matter of importance, I took the liberty to wake my master. "Your pardon, Sir, for disturbing your rest," said I; "but the importance" — "What wouldst thou have with me?" cried he, interrupting me. "My Lord," says the young man who accompanied me, "I have a letter to deliver you from Lopez de Velasco." Don Matthias took the billet, opened it; and, having read it, said to Don Lopez's valet, "Child, I don't rise before noon, whatever diversion is proposed to me to tempt me: think then, if I will rise at six o'clock in the morning to fight. Tell thy master if he is at the same place at two o'clock, I will be with him. Go, carry him that answer." At these words he sunk down in his bed, and fell asleep again.

He rose, and dressed himself very composedly between one and two o'clock, saying, when he went out, that I need not follow him. But I was too impatient to see what became of him, to obey his commands. I walked after him till I came to St. Jerom's walks, where I perceived Don Velasco staid expecting him. They drew and fell to it immediately: the battle was long; they pushed both with great vigour and dexterity. At last victory declared for Don Lopez: he ran my master through. Don Matthias fell, and Don Lopez fled, very well satisfied with the vengeance he had taken. I made what haste I could to assist my master: I found him just departing. The sight drew tears from me, and especially

specially when I considered that he had made me the instrument of his death. But, notwithstanding my grief, I thought of what I had to do for my own interest on this occasion. I returned home immediately, without saying any thing. I bundled up my cloaths and other goods; and I by mistake put some of my master's among them. I carried the bundle to the barber's, and then reported about town the sad accident of which I had been a witness. I told every body that would hear me, and did not fail to make a report of it to Rodriguez. He seemed to be less afflicted than studious about the measures he was to take: he assembled Don Matthias's domestics, ordered them to follow him, and went with them to St. Jerom's walks. We lifted our dying master up, and carried him home, for he breathed still, but died two hours after. Thus perished Signior Don Matthias de Silva, for reading *mal à propos* some counterfeit billetdoux.

C H A P. IX.

What person he entered into the service of, after the death of Don Matthias de Silva.

SOME days after the funeral of Don Matthias, his domestics were all paid off and dismissed. I took up my quarters at my barber's, with whom I lived very friendly, and liked living there much better than at Melendez's. Having money in my pocket, I was not in haste for a service; besides, it was not now every place that would please me. I would wait on no ordinary person, and resolved to be very scrupulous in my choice of a master. I did not think the best too good for me; so favourable an opinion had I conceived of a young Lord's valet preferable to all others.

While I was waiting for a place equal to my merit, I thought I could not spend my time better than by passing some of my idle hours with my

fair Laura, whom I had not seen ever since we made the discovery of ourselves, I durst not dress myself like Don Cæsar de Ribera, nor, unless it was for a disguise, put on that habit without passing for a madman; my cloaths were still pretty fresh, and, by the barber's assistance, I adjusted myself the middle way, between Don Cæsar and Gil Blas. Thus equipped, I went to Arsenia's house, where I found Laura in the same room we formerly met in, and by herself. "Is it you?" cried she, as soon as she saw me; "I thought you had been lost; it is a week ago that you promised to see me; I perceive you are a man of your word, especially with the ladies."

I excused myself on account of the death of my master, the affairs I had to do; and added very gallantly, that, in the midst of all of them, the amiable Laura ran still in my mind. "If it be so," replied she, "I have no more reproaches to make you, and must own that I thought of you too. As soon as I heard of Don Matthias's misfortune, I formed a design that perhaps will not displease you. I have heard my mistress say often, that she wanted a man to be a sort of a steward, and keep an exact account of all the money given him for the expences of the house: I have cast my eye on your Lordship: I fancy you may go through such an employment well enough. "And I fancy," replied I, "I should do it to a miracle; I have read the œconomiques of Aristotle; and for keeping accounts, it is my masterpiece. But, child," continued I, "I have one scruple upon me concerning my serving Arsenia." "What scruple?" says Laura. "I have taken an oath," replied I, "not to serve a citizen: nay, I have sworn it by Styx. If Jupiter durst not break that oath, judge you whether a valet may?" "What do you mean by a citizen?" cries the woman of Arsenia: "what do you take us players to be? Do you level us with the
wives

wives of mechanics or attorneys? Know, friend, that actresses are noble and archnoble, by the alliances they contract with great lords." "On this foot," say I, "I may accept the place you have cut out for me: I shall not demean myself." "No, no," replies she, "to pass from the service of a beau, to that of a stage-heroine. It is still the same world. We go cheek by jowl with people of quality: we have the same equipages; we live as well, and, in the main, act the same parts of life. Indeed, where is the difference between a marquis and a player, take them all the day long? If the marquis is three quarters of the day above the player by birth, the player for the other quarter is still more above him by the part of emperor or king which he acts. This, methinks, is a compensation for our want of nobility and grandeur, and equals us with the lords and ladies of the court."

"Yes truly," replied I, "you are tallies one to another. I find players are not such scoundrels as I took them for, and you have given me a great desire to serve persons of so much honour." "Come then," says she, "two days hence; I need no more time to dispose my mistress to take thee; I will speak in thy favour; and having an ascendant over her, I am satisfied I shall succeed in it."

I thanked Laura for her good-will. I let her see that my gratitude would have no bounds, and assured her of it with transports which left her no room to doubt it. We had a long conversation; and it had been longer, if a footboy had not come, and told my princess that Arsenia wanted her. We then parted: I went home in sweet hopes of an employ to my liking, and was punctual to Laura's appointment two days after. "I expected thee," said Arsenia's waiting woman, "to inform thee that thou art intendant of this household. Follow me, I will present thee to my mistress." At these words she led me through an apartment con-

sisting of five or six rooms within one another, all richly furnished.

What luxury, what magnificence ! I thought myself in the house of a vice-queen, or rather, that I saw all the riches of the world heaped together in one place. True, there were the riches of several nations, and that apartment might be defined to be the temple of a goddess, where each traveller brings an offering of the rairities of his country. I saw the goddess sitting on a satin couch ; she looked charming and plump with the fumes of the sacrifices : she was in a gallant deshabille, and her fair hands were preparing a new head-dress for her to act her part in the next day. " Madam," says her woman, " this is the steward I spoke of ; I can assure you, you cannot have a better." Arsenia looked attentively upon me, and I had the good luck not to displease her. " So, Laura," cries she, " there's a pretty lad, and I doubt not but I shall like him. Child," added she to me, " I receive you into my service, and have only one word to say to you. You will have no reason to be dissatisfied with me, if I have none to be so with you." I answered, " I would do my utmost to give her content." And perceiving we were agreed, I went for my cloaths, and took immediate possession of my post in her house.

C H A P. X.

Which is not longer than the preceding one.

IT was near play-time. My mistress bid me wait on her, with Laura, to the theatre. We entered her tiring-room, where she took off her ordinary dress, and put on a more pompous one to play in. When the curtain was drawn, Laura took me with her to a place where we could see and hear the actors perfectly well. I did not like the greatest part of them, occasioned without doubt by

by what I heard Don Pompeio say to their prejudice. However, several of them were clapped, and some of those put me in mind of the fable of the sucking pig.

Laura told me the names of the actors and actresses, as they came upon the stage. She not only named them, but with characters that were as diverting as they were malicious. "This actor," says she, "is a blockhead, that a bully: that minx whom you see there, and who looks so smirkingly, is called *Rosarda*; the company has but a bad bargain in her, she ought to be listed in the band that is raising for the viceroy of Mexico, and to be suddenly shipped off: behold that bright star advancing there, that setting sun; it is *Castilda*; if she had required a piece of marble out of every lover to build a pyramid, as did heretofore a princess of Egypt, she might have raised one as high as the heavens." In fine, Laura railed at them all alike, the baggage spared not even her own mistress. However, I must own my weakness. I was charmed with Laura, though her character was not morally good. She railed with a grace that made me in love even with her malice. She rose between the acts to see if *Arsenia* wanted her; but, instead of coming to her place again, she staid chatting with the fellows behind the scenes. I followed her once to watch her, and observed she had abundance of acquaintance. I reckoned three players that stopped her, one after another, to talk to her, and I saw they did it with great familiarity. I was not pleased with it, and it was then the first time of my life that I knew what jealousy was; I went back to my place so thoughtful and sad, that Laura perceived it as soon as she returned. "What is the matter with thee, Gil Blas?" said she in a surprise. "What humour has taken thee since I left thee? thou art melancholy and pensive." "It was not without reason, my princess," replied I,

"your airs are a little too free. I saw you speak to the players." "A fine reason for you to be melancholy!" said she, smiling: "does that trouble you? You must bear a great deal more, if you live among actors: you must learn our familiar ways: no jealousy, child: jealous folks, in the comic world, pass for fools. Indeed there are no such creatures here: fathers, husbands, brothers, uncles, cousins, are, with us, the easiest persons upon earth, and very often make their fortunes by it."

After having exhorted me to take umbrage at no body, and mind nothing I saw, she declared I was the happy mortal who had found the way to her heart, assuring me she would always love me, and me only. Upon this assurance, which I might have suspected, without passing for a distrustful person, I promised not to be alarmed; and I kept my word. I saw her that very moment talk and laugh with men. When the play was done, we returned home with our mistress. Florimonda came thither soon after with three old lords, and a player, who were to sup there. Besides Laura and me, there were a cook, a coachman, and a footboy in the house: we joined all five to get the supper ready. The cook, who understood her business as well as Dame Jacinta, prepared the dishes, the coachman assisting her; the waiting-woman and the footboy laid the cloth; and I set out the buffet, where I placed several vessels of silver and gold, and other offerings which the goddesses had received. I furnished it also with bottles of different wine, and served as butler, to shew my mistress I was fit for any thing. I observed the looks of the players during the entertainment. They carried themselves like ladies of importance: they imagined themselves to be women of the first quality. Instead of giving the lords the title of *Excellency*, they gave them only that of *Lordship*, calling them plainly
by

by their names. It is true, the lords themselves spoiled them, by rendering them so familiar with them. The player, on his side, accustomed to act the hero, behaved himself with those lords *sans ceremonie* : he toasted their healths, and one would have thought expected to have been toasted in his turn.

Floridor, a vain empty fellow, who got his first name on the stage, by representing a thing of as little wit and as much vanity as himself, a composition of levity and grimace; this same Floridor, from wearing a livery, is admitted to sit down with gentlemen and persons of condition, and even to call Ovid and Terence, two celebrated wits, his friends.

By the behaviour of my mistress and Florimonda with the old lords, I thought to myself, what Laura told me, the marquis and the player were equal all day; she might have added, they are much more so at night, which they spent together over their cups. Arsenia and Florimonda were naturally wanton; a thousand bold touches escaped them in their discourse intermixed with small favours and toyings, which were savoury things to these old sinners. While my mistress was amusing one of them with some innocent banter, her friend, who sat between the two others, did not act the Sulanna. As I was considering this picture, which had but too many charms for a lad of my age, fruit was brought in. I then filled the table with bottles and glasses, and vanished to sup with Laura, who waited for me. "What dost thou think of those Lords," says she. "Gil Blas?" "They are, doubtless," replied I, "adorers of Arsenia and Florimonda." "No," cried she, "they are old lechers who visit all coquettes alike, and engage with none in particular: they ask but a little complacency of them, and are generous enough to pay well for the trifles that are granted them. Flo-

rimonda and my mistress have no lovers at this time, I mean, no such lovers as assume the authority of husbands ; and would have all the pleasures of a house, because they are at all the expense. As for me, I am glad of it, and maintain, that a coquette of sense ought to avoid such engagements. Why should they suffer any one man to be their master ? They had better leave meanly by getting a penny a time, than flourish on such hard terms."

When Laura's tongue was once set a-going, it was not an easy matter to stop it. Words cost her nothing. What a flux of language ! She told me a hundred adventures that had happened to the actresses of the prince's company ; and I concluded, from her discourse, that I could not be better placed, to acquaint myself perfectly with vice. I was unhappily of an age when it does not strike people with horror ; and the truth is, the baggage knew how to give such colour to it, that nothing appeared but what was delicious. She had not time to tell me the tenth part of the exploits of the actresses, for we were but three hours together. The lords and the player retired with Florimonda, whom they saw home.

When they were gone, Arsenia putting some money into my hand, said, " There, Gil Blas, are ten pistoles for thee to go to market with. Five or six of our gentlemen and ladies dine here to-morrow, be sure take care that we want for nothing." " With this money, Madam," replied I, " I will engage to buy enough to entertain the whole *troop*." " Pray, friend," says she, interrupting me, " correct your expressions. You must never say *troop*, but *company*. You call a parcel of banditti a *troop* : the same is the phrase when you speak of beggars and authors ; but when you talk of players, you must always say a *company*, especially if you are speaking of the actors of Madrid, who
very

very well deserve to be called a *company*." I asked my mistress's pardon, for my making use of so disrespectful a term. I humbly entreated her to excuse my ignorance, protesting, that, for the future, whenever I spake of Messieurs the players of Madrid, in a collective manner, I would always say the *company*.

CHAP. XI.

How the players live together, and after what manner they treat the authors.

NEXT morning I went to market to exercise my employment of steward: it was a fast-day, but by my mistress's order I bought some good fat pullets, some rabbits, partridges, and other poultry. As Messieurs the players were not entirely satisfied with the manners of the church, they did not then exactly follow her commandments. I brought home as much provision as would have served a dozen honest gentlemen for three days in carnival time. The cook had work enough all the forenoon. While dinner was getting ready, Arsenia rose, and was at her toilet till noon, when Signiors Rosimiro and Ricardo came. After them, arrived two actresses, Constantia and Celinaura, and a moment after Florimonda, accompanied with a man who had the air of a most foppish cavalier: his hair was tied behind with coloured ribands, his hat was cocked, and in it he wore a red feather: his fine shirt was shewn at his bosom; his gloves and his pocket-handkerchief hung at his sword-hilt; and he wore his cloak with a grace peculiar to himself. Though he had a good mien, and was well-shaped, I immediately saw something very singular in him. "This gentleman," said I to myself, "must needs be an original." I was not deceived, his character was a most distinguished one. As soon as he entered Arsenia's apartment, he ran with open arms

arms to the actors and actresses, and embraced them with more familiarity than the young beaux who associated with my master made use of. I did not change my opinion when I heard him open his mouth; he dwelt upon every syllable, and pronounced his words in an emphatic tone, with looks and gestures accommodated to the subject. I had the curiosity to ask Laura who that cavalier was? "Thou mayst well desire to know," says she; "it is impossible to see and hear him, and not be curious to know more of him; his name is *Signior Carlos Alonso de la Ventoleia*; he was formerly a player; he left the stage out of humour, and has had sufficient reason to repent it. Didst thou take notice of his black hair? It is a borrowed tint, and so is that of his eyebrows and mustachio; he is older than Saturn. But his parents having forgot to have him registered when he was born, he takes advantage of their negligence, and says he is twenty good years younger than he really is; he is the fullest of himself of any man in Spain. He almost reached his fifteenth year before he could either write or read, and then he took a preceptor who taught him to spell in Greek and Latin. He has abundance of stories by heart, which he has told so often, that at last he believes them; he outs with them in all companies; and one may say, that he frequently shews his wit at the expense of his memory. It is said he is a great actor; I must take other people's word for it: I confess I don't like him. I have heard him sometimes rehearse here, and, among other defects, found he has an affected pronunciation and a quivering voice that gives it an antic and ridiculous air."

Such was the picture that my doxy made of this honorary player; and indeed I never saw a man of a prouder aspect; he affected to speak finely, and did not fail to take out of his budget two or three stories, which he related with a studied and imposing

sing air. On the other hand, the actors and actresses, who did not come there to hold their tongues, were not mute; they entertained themselves with their absent companions, after a most uncharitable manner; but that goes for nothing with players and authors. They made no conscience of backbiting their neighbours. "You don't know, Ladies," says Rotimiro, "what our dear brother Cesarino has done lately; he bought some silk stockings, some ribands and gloves, and had them brought this morning to the house by a little page, as if a countess had sent them." "What deceit there is?" cries Signior de la Ventoleria, with the air of a coxcomb; "in my time people had more integrity; we did not think of putting such tricks upon one another. It is true, the ladies took care to spare our invention; they often made us presents." "'Sdeath," cries Ricardo, with as much vanity as the old player, "so they do still. If it was permitted me to explain myself thereupon, I could——But one must not tell certain adventures, especially when persons of rank are concerned in them."

"Pray, Gentlemen," cries Florimonda, interrupting them, "don't brag of ladies favours; all the world knows what ladies they are——let us talk of Ismenia; it is said the Lord who spent so much money upon her, has left her at last." "Yes," says Constantia, "and she has lost a tradesman too, whom she had almost ruined; I know the occasion of it. Her Mercury served her *qui pro quo*. He carried to the lord a letter she wrote to the tradesman, and gave the tradesman the letter she wrote to the lord." "Great losses these, my dear," replies Florimonda. "As for the lord," says Constantia, "he had run out his estate, but the tradesman had still something left, and was worth keeping."

Such were the subjects they talked of before dinner;

ner ; and, while they were at table, I should never have done if I went about to repeat all the scandal I heard. The reader will excuse me for omitting it, to tell how a poor devil of an author, who came to Arsenia's when they had almost dined, was received.

Our footboy came and told my mistress out aloud, that a man with foul linen, dirty shoes, and who, saving her presence, looked like a poet, demanded to speak with her. " Shew him in," replied Arsenia. " Don't stir, Gentlemen ; it is only our author." So it was indeed, and one that had a play in the house. He brought my mistress her part. His name was *Pedro de Moya* : when he entered the room, he made five or six low bows to the company, who took no manner of notice of him ; only Arsenia nodded her head a little, in return for the compliments with which he overwhelmed her. He drew nearer to them, trembling, and in the utmost confusion : he let fall his hat and gloves, took them up, and approached my mistress to whom he presented her part, with more respect than a lawyer gives a petition to a judge. " Be pleased to accept, Madam," says he, " the part I presume to offer you." She took it after a cold and scornful manner, and did not condescend so much as to answer his compliments. This did not discourage our author, who took hold of the occasion, to give another part to Rosimiro, and another to Florinda, who treated him no more civilly than Arsenia had done. On the contrary, the player, as obliging as these gentlemen naturally are, insulted him with the most piquant raillery. *Pedro de Moya* was sensible of it, but durst not retort, for fear his play should suffer. He retired without saying a word to them in answer ; but, I could perceive, was mightily concerned at the reception he met with. I doubt not but he passed his censures on the players according to their deserts ; and the

the players, on the other hand, began, as soon as he was gone, to talk of the author with as much courtesy. "Methinks," says Florimonda, "Signior Pedro de Moya did not go away very well satisfied."

"Don't let that trouble you, Madam," cries Rosimiro, "are authors worth minding? If we suffered them to be equal with us, it would spoil them. I know those poor creatures; I know them full well: they will presently forget themselves on the least encouragement. Use them like slaves, and don't be afraid of tiring out their patience. If they leave you sometimes in anger, their itch of writing will bring them back again, and it is enough for them that we will deign to act their plays." "Right," says Arsenia; "we never lose our author, unless he has made his fortune; and as soon as that is done by our merit only, he grows lazy and writes no more. True, the company can do without them, and the public does not miss them."

This discourse was applauded by them all. As ill as the actors treat the authors, the latter have no help for it; and the players, by putting themselves above them, shew what a contemptible opinion they have of them.

C H A P. XII.

Gil Blas took a fancy to the theatre. He gives himself up to the pleasures of the stage, and in a little while grows weary of them.

OUR guests sat at table till it was time to go to the theatre. I attended them thither, and saw the play again. I was so pleased with it, that I resolved not to miss a night. I never failed being there, and insensibly accustomed myself to the ways of the actors. How wonderful is the force of habit! I was particularly charmed with those that used most rants and gesticulations. I was not singular

gular in it. The beauty of the pieces touched me as much as the manner of representing them; some of them put me into transports; and I liked those best, where all the cardinals, or the twelve peers of France, were introduced. I got some part of those incomparable poems by heart: I remember I learned one intire play called *The queen of flowers*, in two days. The Rose, who was the Queen, had for her confident the Violet, and for her squire the Jessamin. I thought nothing finer than such works; as that which, in my opinion, did a great deal of honour to the wit of our nation.

I was not contented with adorning my mind with the fine strokes of these masterpieces of the drama. I laboured to perfect my joys, and, in order to it, hearkened eagerly to whatever the players said; if they commended a play I esteemed it; if they discommended, I despised it. I took it for granted, that they understood plays, as jewellers do diamonds. Nevertheless, Don Pedro de Moya's play had a great run, though they did not think it would have taken. However, I could not suspect their judgment; I had rather conclude, that the public wanted common sense, than question the infallibility of the company. But I was assured by every one, that the plays which the players thought best of, had generally the worst success; and on the contrary, those that they disliked, were almost always received with applause. They told me they hardly ever hit right, and gave me instances of a thousand plays which succeeded quite contrary to their decisions. I had need of these, and many more proofs, to give me an ill opinion of the excellence of their taste.

I shall never forget what happened one day at the acting of a new play. The players thought it dull and tedious, nay, they imagined the audience would not hear it out: but they would venture, and played the first act, which was clapped, and
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the second more than the first. "What a devil," says Rosinairo, "this play takes!" They then played the third act, which pleased more than the two former. "I cannot comprehend it," says Ricardo, "we concluded this play would be damned: and see how it is liked."——

"Gentlemen," cries a player that was by, with great plainness, "there are a thousand witty strokes in it, which we did not observe, and that is the reason of its taking.

I ever after looked upon the actors to be wretched judges, and gave them their due, in my sentiments of their merit. They make good all the ridiculous things the world says of them. I have known actors and actresses spoiled by being clapped; and looking on themselves as objects of admiration, they have thought they did a favour to the public when they played. I was shocked with their defects; but it was my misfortune to take delight in this way of living, and to plunge myself in debauchery. How could I help it? All their discourse was pernicious to youth, and I saw nothing but what contributed to corrupt me. If I had known nothing of what passed at Castilda's, Constantia's, and the other actresses, our own house was enough to ruin all the young men in Madrid, It was frequented not only by old lords, but by young rakes, by heirs just come to their estates, by citizens and lawyers. The grave and the gay were confounded there, and every one welcome for his money.

Florimonda, who lived in a house in our neighbourhood, dined and supped every day with Arsenia. There was such a friendship between them, that abundance of people were surpris'd at it. They wondered two coquettes could live so lovingly together, and doubted not but they would quarrel one time or other about a spark; in which they were mistaken, they were hearty friends. Instead
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of being jealous of each other, as the rest of the sex are, they lived in common. They chose to divide the spoils of men, rather than dispute their sighs.

Laura, following the example of those two illustrious associates, made the most of her young days. She had reason to tell me I should see fine doings there. However, I was not jealous. I promised to imitate the company in that point: I dissembled my sentiments for some time, and was satisfied with asking the names of the men whom I saw she entertained in private. She always told me it was an uncle, or a cousin. She had, I found, a very numerous family, exceeding that of King Priam. She did not content herself with uncles and cousins, she conversed also with strangers, and acted the widow of quality at the old woman's I have spoken of. In fine, Laura, to give a just and exact idea of her, was as young, as pretty, and as much a coquette as her mistress, who had no other advantage of her, than that she publicly diverted the public.

I was borne down by the torrent, for three weeks; I gave myself up to all manner of pleasures; but I must own, that in the midst of them I often felt that remorse which came from my education, and embittered all my sweets: debauchery could not triumph over that remorse; on the contrary, it increased in proportion with it; and by an effect of my natural disposition, I began to conceive a horror for the disorder of the players lives. "Ah! wretch," cried I to myself, "is it thus that thou answerest the expectation of thy relations? is it not enough to have deceived them in chusing another profession than that of a preceptor! Does thy servile condition hinder thy living like an honest man? Does it become thee to live with such wicked people? Envy, choler, and

and avarice reigns every where among them. Modesty is banished by these : by those, temperance and industry : all of them are proud and insolent. In a word, I was resolved to dwell no longer with such abandoned sinners.

The End of the FIRST VOLUME.





